風波しのぎ

Kazanami Shinogi

THE NEW GATE

ザ・ニュー・ゲート

03.ファルニッド獣連合

アルファポリス

THE NEW GATE VOLUME 3

Falnido Beast Alliance

Acknowledgement

This is the unofficial ebook of THE NEW GATE in English translation.

Original translations can be found at Shin Translations.

Enjoy^.^

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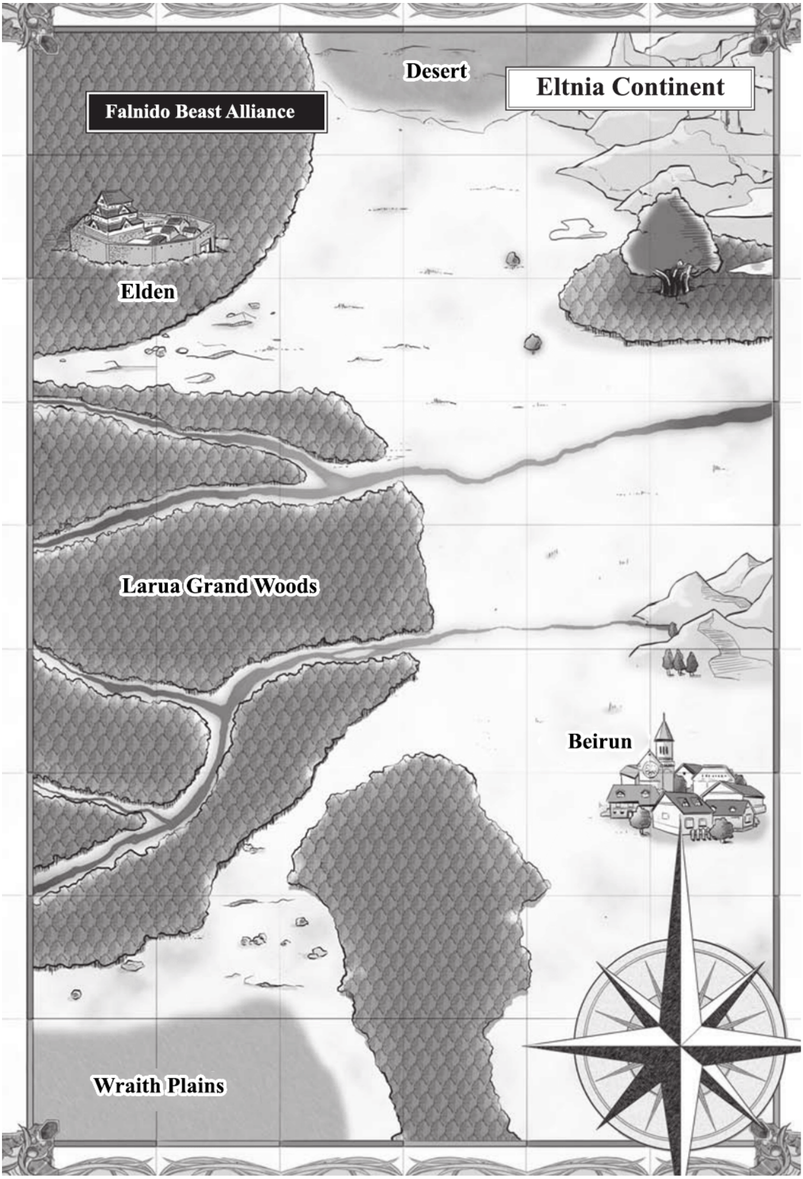
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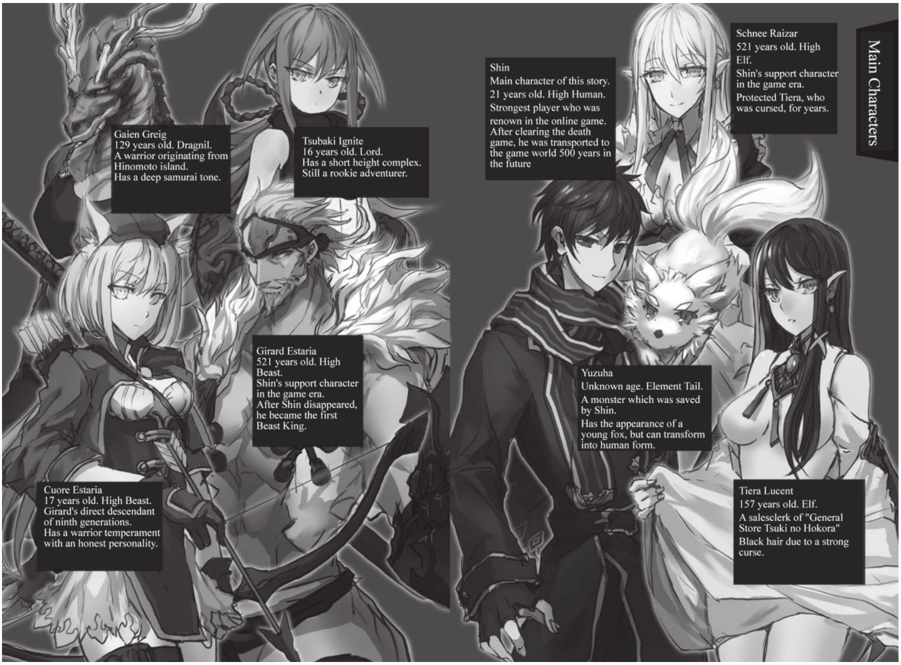


Main Characters

Gaien Greig
129 years old. Dragnil.
A warrior originating from Hinomoto island.
Has a deep samurai tone.

Tsubaki Ignite
16 years old. Lord.
Has a short height complex.
Still a rookie adventurer.

Girard Estaria
521 years old. High Beast.
Shin's support character in the game era.
After Shin disappeared, he became the first Beast King.

Cuore Estaria
17 years old. High Beast.
Girard's direct descendant of ninth generations.
Has a warrior temperament with an honest personality.

Shin
Main character of this story.
21 years old. High Human.
Strongest player who was renown in the online game.
After clearing the death game, he was transported to the game world 500 years in the future

Schnee Raizar
521 years old. High Elf.
Shin's support character in the game era.
Protected Tiera, who was cursed, for years.

Yuzuha
Unknown age. Element Tail.
A monster which was saved by Shin.
Has the appearance of a young fox, but can transform into human form.

Tiera Lucent
157 years old. Elf.
A salesclerk of "General Store Tsuki no Hokora"
Black hair due to a strong curse.

Chapter 1 Part 1

“Then, let’s start getting ready now.”

Shin decided to head toward the Falnido Beast Alliance where his old friend Girard awaited, and they began making the preparations respectively. However, because Tsuki no Hokora could wholly be carried with him, most of the preparations were unnecessary.

The elf, Tiera, returned to her room to choose the clothes that were appropriate for going out. The Element Tail, Yuzuha, stood by on top of Shin’s head in the young fox mode. The High Elf, Schnee, looked back at Shin and said;

“I have to go complete the request. Could you buy some food and supplies, just in case?”

“Okay. Since I’m going to go to the adventurers’ guild after I lightly temper a sword, I’ll buy them on the way.”

“You’re going to the guild?”

“Yeah. I guess we’ll go do our separate actions for a while; Schnee, you’re still on the Skull Faces matter, right? Therefore, I’ll take a request toward the Falnido area, and improve my rank while I’m at it. It’s regrettable, but I can’t stay a rank G forever.”

To enter the guild and stay at the lowest rank forever, was not a good thing in the eyes of society either. Because he knew that staying as a rank G for a long time was a rare case, even for a person who didn’t have remarkable abilities, he thought to at least to make it to F rank.

Since the Skull Faces' subjugation was not a request, Shin currently had zero request achievements.

"I understand. What about the meeting place?"

"I'll decide it after seeing the status of the request. We can always use the message card to talk to each other."

"If so, let's form a party. We can use the voice chat in that case. It's easier than using message cards."

"EH, Seriously!?"

According to Schnee, only partners in the same party could use the voice chat. Now the speaking and writing via the mind was called 【Mind Chat】.

"However, only we, the old generation, are able to use it immediately. People like Tiera, a new generation; someone who was born after the Dusk of the Majesty, I heard they are unable to use it if they don't trust each other. Even so, I don't know how true that is."

"What happens if the old and new generations are mixed in a party?"

"Only the old generation is able to use it."

Because she didn't know on what kind of principle it worked, she appeared to be unclear on the exact conditions. In the case of the new generation, they seemed to suddenly be able to use it one day. Certainly, the 【Mind Chat】 was not usable when the party was disbanded, but if the party united again, the person who experienced that communication would be able to use it right away.

“So that means, only Schnee and I can use it immediately, huh?”

“Yuzuha is also able to talk to Shin~”

A sweet voice came down from on top of his head.

“In the case of Yuzuha, I think it is because of Yuzuha’s individual talents and Shin’s tamer ability. I also think it’s better if you don’t announce that too much. Please remember the party that we are talking about and the guild’s party are two different things.”

“Different?”

“What do you mean?”

Shin and Yuzuha had a question mark floating above them.

“A party is only recognized by the guild after it has registered with the guild. However, the party formation system for the old generation, like Shin and me, was performed through the menu display so the general public is not aware of it. In other words, we can create a double party.”

To begin with, the menu screen seemed to be limited to the people who are still alive since the Dusk of the Majesty. For the new generation, they couldn’t read the precise explanation notes of the skills and arts and somehow only understood how to use it, not how it worked.

“If there is no guild card for the new generation, they only roughly know my stats, excluding my level, huh? But eventually, only a party that was formed in the guild is recognized by the guild, don’t you agree? Is there an advantage of forming a party the way the old generation did?”

"It's being able to use the Mind Chat. In this world, when there are many partners who can do long-distance communication, only that alone is useful. Since there are almost no human beings that have the message card, I guess. Also in any country, the person who has the Mind Chat is given preferential treatment. Even if that person is not an adventurer for an old generation. Because there is no need to go to battle, if that person joined a party and it was dispatched to various locations, as they are able to quickly receive information."

"I see, so a person who is able to use the Mind Chat is hired just because of the skill, huh?"

The communication method in this world was letter delivery by a messenger or a wagon. The speed of the information transmitted was extremely slow compare with Mind Chat.

From Schnee's story, only a small handful of adventurers from the whole new generation were able to use Mind Chat. Now, since the old generation has decreased in number, it's worth has become immeasurable.

"Kuu~? Is it really that amazing?"

Yuzuha asked while shaking its tails.

"Yeah, it's amazing. As an example, I can convey my thoughts to my partner who is in a remote place immediately. If I'm hurt and can't move, I can call for help, and I can pass along important information right away."

"Kuu! Yuzuha will help if Shin is in trouble!"

"Please take care of me at that time. Yuzuha too, can call me if you are in trouble.”

“Okay!”

Yuzuha, who didn’t understand the advantage of fast communication, somehow understood that it was amazing from Shin’s words. It was not possible to say if it completely understood though, as it was still a child.

“Now, the old and new generation that are able to use Mind Chat have to form a party with the guild. So the Mind Chat is not usable with a commoner who has not registered to the guild. If you have time, it would be nice to help Tiera register as an adventurer.”

“That’s a good idea. Then, do you want me to bring her to the guild with me?”

“That would be really helpful. She should be able to move better than an amateur since I have trained her in basic fighting techniques for the last 50 years.”

“Eh, you trained her?”

The other day, Wilhelm, who had fought together with Shin in the Wraith Plains, said that he had received training from Schnee as well. And he was beaten up one-sidedly.

“Yes, is there something wrong with that?”

It seemed like Schnee didn’t know why Shin was surprised, as she looked slightly puzzled. That spontaneous action made Shin felt embarrassed, but he somehow kept his composure.

“Was it safe?”

“Yes, though I don’t understand what you mean by that.”

The figure of Schnee doing Spartan training just popped into Shin’s head. For some reason, that image seemed to be pretty harsh.

“I don’t know what Shin imagined, but it was only basic training that was done. Because I’m able to go outside of the barrier, I only teach her when I have time. Although her level is low, she should have superior movements compared to a newly fledged adventurer.”

Schnee, who seemed to have read what Shin had imagined, said that with a slightly displeased tone.

“Iya, that’s… well, sorry. Because I heard that training with you seemed to be a little harsh.”

Shin apologized upfront at this time. It was an inviolable rule, that his mother in the real world told him. Incidentally, in his father’s words, the situation would become worse if he did not apologize.

Somehow he recalled these kind of things from the talk with Schnee.

“Then, in exchange, you will listen to my simple request.”

“Ah yes…I understand.”

Schnee said it with a smile. The smiling face that could make the whole nation captive was a little frightening to Shin now.

He felt a little worried about whatever he was going to be made to do.

◆◆◆◆

Before long, Schnee went out for shopping, and Shin then took Yuzuha along with him to the blacksmith's workshop. He wanted to lightly temper a sword before going to the guild.

"Now then, let's do this."

He took out an unprocessed iron ingot from his Item Box. It wasn't bad one but it wasn't a good quality one either, it was just a normal ingot.

A longsword was also a common thing to make. Of course, it would be forged. Although metal casting is easy and fast, he couldn't sell it like that.

"Does this become a sword?"

"Yes, but don't approach me too much when I'm forging, because it's dangerous."

After telling Yuzuha to keep its distance, Shin began making the longsword. His body moved without trouble since coming into this world, probably because he had done this for more than 5 years.

The iron was heated and beat with a hammer. The sound of metal being struck, "Clang", "Clang", resounded in the forge, and Yuzuha's tails synchronized with a small flutter.

When hitting the ingot in the game, it didn't matter where it was struck as the result was still the same. But now that it was reality, that wouldn't work. Nevertheless, Shin somehow understood where he should hit. It might be the benefit of the skill. While thinking whether a real craft man might have such a sense, he set the metal and hit it with the hammer again.

“Amazing~!”

Yuzuha raised a cheer, as it saw the ingot changing form almost instantly. It was at a speed that would leave an ordinary blacksmith stunned. One would wonder whether it was alright to be that fast, but obviously it was not alright. Only inferior goods would be produced by striking it quickly.

It was the【Blacksmith】 skill which Shin possessed that allowed this. With the creator’s intended design known, it was a cheat skill that increased the production speed to an efficiency that was impossible to reproduce in the real world.

Certainly, it didn’t mean that any weapon could be created with the blacksmith skill. A Magic skill was needed for magic bestowal, and the skills 【Mixing】 and 【Tempered Metal】 were necessary for raw materials as well.

When the person tried to master a production job, it was inevitable that the person had to learn how another production worked.

“The first one.”

He looked at the completed sword he had made for practice. Though there was only a blade, no one would think it was only made from an ordinary ingot.

The light that entered from the entrance of the blacksmith’s workshop was reflected by the sword blade, and a dim white light on the blade showed its sharpness. Even if an amateur handled it, the item seemed to raised the probability of success in battle.

“…I was fired up a little too much.”

Though it was made just as an experiment, it obviously became goods that would cause uproar when put up on the storefront. It was not possible to simply say that this was a common longsword. When the item was bestowed with magic, it would be classified as 《Rare》 or 《Unique》 grade.

A sword that was bestowed with magic was known as a Cursed Sword, or sometimes a Holy Sword in this society. Because there were few people in this world that had a weapon that was higher than 《Legend》 grade, weapons such as a 《Rare》 grade were often found up to 《Unique》 grade. However, for weapons that were above the 《Legend》 grade, they had a higher ability than a Cursed Sword without any magic bestowal.

“A failure?”

“No, it’s not a failure, but this can’t be sold. There are no weapon shops in the kingdom that put up magically bestowed weapons.”

It didn’t mean that there were no magically bestowed weapons on sale, but it was rare. Moreover, because it was Shin who tempered it, the weapon’s performance was different from the other cursed swords around there. If someone bought a Cursed Sword with an average ability from the weapon shop and put two longswords together, that would be the limit that Cursed Sword could break. However, one of Shin’s tempered Cursed Swords would be able cut 4 additional longswords. If he put in some serious effort, even one of his low-grade Cursed Sword could break it. The weapons that Shin made and could rally with the 《Legend》 grade ones were not just for show.

Nonetheless, it backfired this time. There were differences between the blacksmiths in this world and the blacksmiths in the game era, especially when it came to weapon design.

"For some reason, I have a feeling. The next one should be good."

He was probably doing it unconsciously. So, while being aware of the boosting performance from the blacksmith skill, he made another longsword. The second longsword had a bit of a high performance, and the third one was somehow a normal one. Because those ready-made goods were aggravating, he continued to mass-produce swords with a similar ability to the second one.

He repeated this for about one hour, and decided to stop after he had made several of them. Meanwhile Yuzuha, instead of moving around and making noises, was watching Shin and the completed longswords for a long time. It appeared to be so interested that it lost track of the time, probably because of the concentration that was peculiar to a child.

"I guess Tiera should be ready soon."

They left the blacksmith's forge and headed back towards the living room. It was partly because he presumed that the presence that came out of the room was Tiera, that he finished up.

"Ah, Shin. I'm sorry to have kept you waiting for so long."

"No, it's nothing. I just tempered with swords here and there."

"I didn't think I would take up so much time myself. After such a long time, I don't know what I should wear."

Tiera's point was understandable. For the first time after about 100 years, she would have to go to a place where there were a lot of people. It couldn't be helped that she was hesitating over what clothes to wear.

Because she was told that she had to register with the adventurers' guild, Tiera wore clothes similar to what a hunter would wear, emphasizing easiness of movement. What Tiera chose was close to what Els had equipped before. Especially the combination of long boots and leggings.

On top, she wore a light green colored jacket with black colors on the inner side. Because its design was made to fit the body, Tiera's body shape could be seen clearly. This might be the standard for elves.

She appeared to be unarmed, but it was concealed in the form of a card. A lot of elves had a battle style that combined magic with daggers and bows.

"Well, shall we go?"

"Yeah, let's hurry up a little."

"Kuu"

Yuzuha, who was in fox mode, was put on Shin's head, and they walked out of the store. It was a fine day. Warm sunlight shined over the two people and the animal.

"Ha~, it is nice on the outside after all."

"Yes, it is fine weather and ——!?"

It came into Shin's view as he casually answered Tiera and he turned to face her, an astounding sight was displayed.

It was a pair of spheres.

It was the most magnificent pair of globes he had ever seen before.

(Amazing…)

To put it in simple words, while basking in the sunlight, Tiera was also stretching her body. However, when she raised her arms and bent her back in a nice way, her chest naturally stuck out as a result. Only the owner of that body could know, from the current posture, the size of what was being emphasized. Shin’s eyes were glued to it.

“Phew, shall we go?”

“Uhm, yeah.”

She didn’t seem to realize that her chest was being stared at, and Shin tried to look calm. “I didn’t see anything, at least not on purpose” was what he tried to say with his body behaviour.

While walking next to such Shin, Tiera coughed in a whisper.

“And, what are your thoughts on my chest?”

“Iya, they are seriously perfe————HA!?”

It was said that a man’s glancing look was similar to staring for a women. Shin didn’t know whether it was true or not, but at least he knew he was found out by Tiera.

“Shin will be in charge of the shopping fee. And, really, you did look too much earlier.”

“That was my bad. Haa, that was an expensive view…”

“It’s only natural because you so rudely stared at a maiden’s breasts.”

Shin couldn’t help but smile wryly at Tiera’s smiling face. Did she aim for it? Or was it done spontaneously? Only Tiera knew the truth.

“Kuu?”

While Yuzuha tilted its head, it watched the exchange between the two people.

◆◆◆◆

They left Tsuki no Hokora and arrived at the gate of the Bayreuth kingdom after a short while. Was it a slow hour? There was not a lot of pedestrian traffic.

When they passed through the gate and entered inside, Tiera looked around while surveying the surroundings.

“Uwaa, there is a great number of people. Are there always so many?”

“No, it’s not crowded right now. There are twice as many people as this in the mornings and evenings.”

“There are? I can’t imagine what it’s like when it’s crowded.”

Tiera’s eyes sparkled like those of a child who went to an amusement park for the first time.

“So the things that the people, who came into the store, said is true.”

She seemed to have heard various stories from adventurers who came to buy goods. Since she couldn’t go out from the store, she couldn’t do anything but imagine. It seemed that when she actually experienced it by herself, she realized that what they had said was not a lie.

“You sure are in high spirits, aren’t you?”

“I-I’m not…that excited…”

She was probably aware of it herself. Though she denied it, the words coming out from her mouth were a little weak.

“Let’s register you first, and then do the shopping later. You can decide to do whatever you want in the remaining time.”

“T-That’s sounds good. Then, let’s go to the guild right away.”

Was she drawn to the word ‘sightseeing’? Tiera walked rapidly while grabbing Shin’s hand.

Didn’t she just say “The crowds are scary”? Now she was charging through the main street by force.

“Wait! It’s good to hurry, but do you know where the guild is?”

“…Ah!”

It seemed like she didn’t know. She suddenly stopped, and threw glances at the surroundings.

“Come on, over here.”

“…Okay.”

Because it was truly pointed out for the second time, Tiera also finally listened.

They walked down the street as Shin held Tiera’s hand to lead her.

From Tiera’s point of view, while in the crowd, she would lose sight of Shin if she took her eyes off of him for a second.

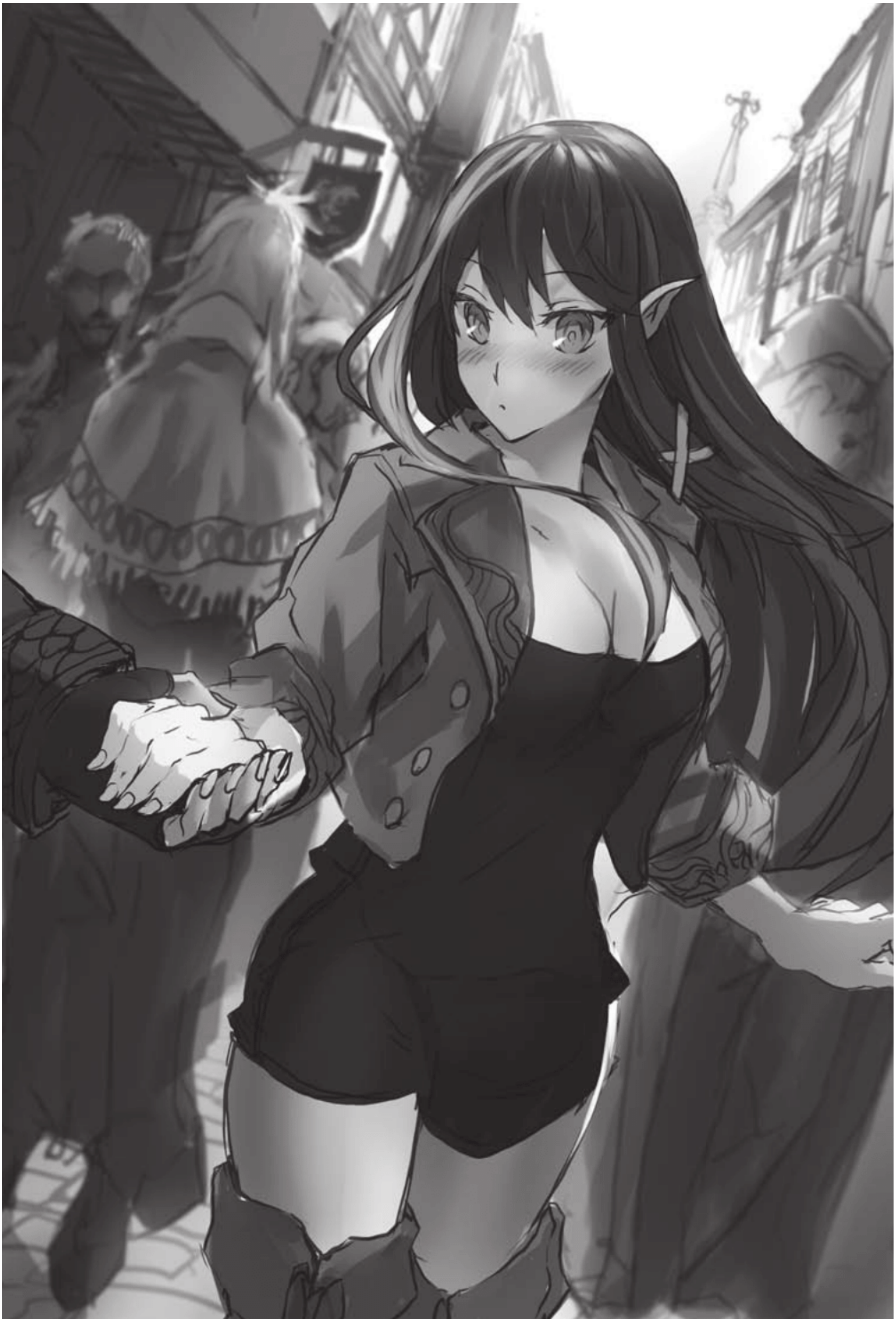
They walked along the street while being careful not to bump into any pedestrians. As they approached an intersection with a particularly lot of people, she unintentionally saw a man and a woman walking together in front of them, and Tiera now noticed what kind of situation she was in.

(Hands holding… remaining connected…)

Probably because she was carried away, due to this being her first time in the outside world in 100 years, but she didn’t notice that she was walking hand in hand with the opposite sex until now.

Because of the size difference, Tiera’s hand was wrapped in Shin’s hand.

It was different from hers, his hand was a bit bigger and more rugged. When she saw her hand in a certain way, she had a feeling that her face was somehow blushing.



(So this is a man, right?)

Since she tended the store, she had obviously talked to men. However, she had never touched any of them. Tiera moved her legs while finding herself not really understanding her own feelings.

“Hey, that’s the Adventurers’ guild.”

“I heard it was big, and it really is!”

The largest building in the area came into view when they passed through the crowd. That was their destination, the adventurers’ guild.

While it was inevitable that adventurers would make up most of the pedestrians now, Shin was aware that an awful lot of gazes were directed toward them.

“Somehow, aren’t we being watched?”

“Yeah, probably.”

The passing adventurers were mostly men, and Shin didn’t know the reason for why their glances were mixed with hostility. He verified if there was something wrong with his state and noticed.

“Ah, we’re holding hands.”

Even under normal circumstances, Tiera was a beautiful woman. Naturally, a man who walked hand in hand with such a woman was exposed to jealous looks.

“Sorry, I thought it was likely that we would get separated since there are a lot of people.”

He separated his hand from Tiera’s in a hurry.

“Ah…”

That time, when he let go, he had a feeling that he faintly heard a sound that seemed to be disappointment coming from Tiera's mouth. He decided to think that it was just his excessive self-consciousness and forgot about it.

"All right, let's get you registered quickly then."

"T-That's right. Let's do it."

They entered the guild with Tiera looking a little flustered. Was it because the time was in the middle between morning and noon? There were not many people in the guild either.

The figures of Celica and Els were seen at the receptionist desk, and when Shin and Tiera were half-way there, the two people who noticed them showed dissimilar reactions.

Celica had a little of a sullen expression, but Els momentarily had a very surprised look on her face, which quickly erupted into one of joy.

"Tiera!"

Els jumped over the counter at the same time as she called out her name, ran straight to Tiera, and hugged her tightly.

"Wa, E-Els!?"

Though Tiera was surprised at the sudden embrace, she relaxed when she realized that the person was Els.

"Wait Els, it's a bit tight."

"Oh, I'm sorry. Though I've heard the news, I couldn't contain myself when I saw you in person.”

While having tears in the corner of her eyes, Els started to gently hold Tiera. The abrupt situation caused the adventurers who were there to stare in wonder.

“I really wanted to go see you immediately, but I’ve been very busy with the guild for a while now. It wasn’t possible to leave.”

“Because you’re not my mother, you really worry too much.”

“What are you saying. If you’re the daughter of Eilen, then it’s as if you’re my daughter too.”

Els embraced Tiera like a true mother.

Away from the two people, Celica talked to Shin.

“Shin-sama. What kind of acquaintance is that person?”

“Due to a little twist of fate, we will be traveling together. So she will register as an adventurer for the occasion.”

“I heard you were walking hand in hand like lovers though?”

“That’s absurd! How did you hear that!?”

Shin was surprised at the speed of which the information travelled. Perhaps, there was a guy who could use Mind Chat standing guard! Certainly a cautious lookout, but really, this was only a trivial matter. The adventurer, who knew Shin’s name and face, accidentally saw the two people, and Celica, who were receiving requests at that time, grumbled when she heard about it.

"Because she is a beautiful woman, right? Not because you are a man, right?"

"Um, you're not using some scathing words, are you?"

"No no, not at all."

'I guess there's nothing', was what Shin wanted to say.

While they continued on with the exchange, they noticed that they had attracted some attention as well.

"Why is it that other people seem to be distancing themselves?"

"Ara, I think they don't want to break the deeply emotional reunion, huh? Besides, it was Els who suddenly jumped out."

"Uhh"

"Now, now, both of you. I want you to register Tiera for the time being."

Thereupon, Celica and Els returned to their professional expressions, and bowed slightly.

"Ah, my apologies. I was acting shameful."

"Just now was because I also wanted to meet the person in question."

She was probably very glad. Els' eyes were still a little red. Apparently, she seemed to have been a good friend of Tiera's mother.

"Um, what should I do?"

"I will take care of the registration. It was my turn to take care of new registrations anyway."

Els said that and lead Tiera to the second floor. Just like Shin did before, Tiera filled out the documents and listened to the explanation.

"Now then, I should go and look at the list of requests."

"Oh, Shin-sama. I'm sorry, but may I have a bit of your time, please?"

"Me? Well, I don't really mind."

Shin, who was going to go to see about requests in the Falnido area, was called out by Celica. She seemed to have to talk to Shin individually about something or another.

Because he was asked to hand over his guild card, Shin took out the guild card from Item Box and handed it over to Celica. Celica then proceed to engrave the guild card, and placed it on top of the tray-like thing..

"What are…"

While Shin thought about asking what she was doing, the transparent guild card was dyed yellow.

"There we go, the improved rank ends with this. From now on, Shin-sama is rank E."

"Yes?"

Shin absentmindedly replied, due to the sudden rank up. At this point, Shin actually had a zero request accomplishment rate at the present time. If just by an evaluation of the guild; let alone rank improvement, he would be defeated even by a newcomer who had the same rank G.

Nevertheless, to suddenly become a rank E, it was too much to be expected. He didn’t think about rising to E and skipping F altogether.

That reminded him of the explanation he had received from Celica before, the talk about the classification of the card by rank.

SS was gold, S was silver, A was black, B was white, C was red, D was blue, E was yellow, F was green, and the lowest rank G was semi-transparent.

“Errr, there aren’t any accomplished requests yet, so why did I rank up?”

“Certainly Shin-sama’s official request achievement rate is zero percent. However, there are the results of the subjugation of a high rank Skull Face and the suppression of the Skull Faces’ outbreak in a large quantity. Because Shin-sama’s report was proved to be authentic by an investigation handled by us, the guild, the promotion of Shin-sama was decided as a partial reward. It is rank E, but if one more request is accomplished, it will rank up to D.”

“I see, but why do it to an unfinished state?”

“If you rank up too fast, it would not look good in the other adventurers’ eyes. I think rank A is enough for an individual like you, but when I think of the strife it would cause, it only became a rank improvement like this. Of course, the bonus is paid, too. I need to return the previously borrowed jewel before that though, please wait here for a while.”

Celica gave the guild card back to Shin, and entered the inner room of the receptionist desk for a moment. She came back in less than 5 minutes. There was a bag and a dull shining jewel grasped in her hand.

“This is the jewel that was borrowed, and here is 250 J gold coins of reward inside this bag.”

For convenience sake, it seemed like she brought them in gold coins. Though white gold exists, it was not used in everyday life. One piece of white gold could make one live and enjoy life for more than ten years. The gold coins in front of him were considered a large sum of money from an adventurers’ viewpoint, and Shin suddenly voiced his thoughts.

“I’m just wondering, but is it possible for you to make the guild card as quickly as possible in exchange for the reward?”

“The guild card? Let me see. I think it can be done by today at noon if it’s rushed.”

“Then that please. Though I will be going afar for a little while, I want to leave as soon as possible.”

“I understand. Then, the reward will be 200 gold coins. Is that alright with you?”

“I don’t care about that, but is it fine to accept a reward of this magnitude?”

Though only 50 gold coins were deducted, Shin had heard that the guild cards were made with the guild’s original special technique, so he felt that there might only be a few of them.

"I will have the experts do their best for a little while, and the additional charge is satisfactory enough from the received amount of money. There will be too much when all of the bonus is returned."

"I see, by the way, how much is the subjugation reward for the Skull Faces?"

"5 silver coins per Pawn class. For the Jack class, it is 5 gold coins. Actually you can earn a lot more because the Jack class' armor and swords are valuable if sold."

Celica added and smiled wryly, the degree of danger of a Jack class is in a whole other league. In fact, once or twice a year some adventurers go off to fight with a Pawn class, in a spur of the moment feeling, in spite of the warning from the guild's staff, and then get killed by a Jack class that is avenging the Pawn class.

When thinking about the amount of money that Celica spoke of, Shin's reward was naturally almost 500 gold coins, but because a formal request was not issued, the reward became this amount of money along with the rank improvement. To begin with, that was not the combat capability that a rookie should have shown on his own, so without Barlux, the guild master, and Els and her acquaintances, the skill successors, it was certain that the reward would not have been so easily paid like this.

"Do the Skull Faces appear that frequently?"

"There is a nearby spawn spot called the Wraith Plains, but normally there will be more than a couple of them. It's not so bad when it is a Pawn class, but several individuals, which are higher ranked than a Jack class, appeared; I heard it happened for the first time, too. Such an event has never occurred before."

"Is that so. By the way, does the guild deal in information, besides monsters?"

"Information other than about the monsters? Well, it depends. There is a lot information about monsters and ruins that comes in, but you should inquire about that with people who specialize in information."

"Indeed. Incidentally, may I ask what kind of information you have on Sacred Place?"

If they had detailed information on monsters and ruins, they might have gotten their hands on some information on the city that fell after the Dusk of the Majesty, which was called Sacred Place, too.

"There isn't a lot of information about the Sacred Place. Even though the guild investigated it, because the danger zone is not normal at all, it's impossible to let someone go towards it just like that. About the information, it was decided to not disclose it to adventurers who are below a minimum of rank B. I'm sorry, but showing it to you, Shin-sama, with your current rank is…"

"Ah, don't worry about it so much, I was just interested. I will come back to hear about it after I've raised my rank."

As one would expect, she could not easily give out information on Sacred Place. Shin thought of confirming this again with Schnee some other time.

"Which reminds me, you said you are going away, right? Are you looking for a request towards the destination?"

"Yes, I intend to complete at least one request. Is there a request that is going to the Falnido area?"

He could go and look at the bulletin board, but it was quicker to directly ask Celica for a good request.

Celica picked up a thick file from under the counter, and removed a piece of request paper from that.

“Well, how about this request here? There is no request going to Falnido for the moment, but this is a request for going to Beirun, which is on the way.”

“Is it alright for Tiera to receive the request too?”

“Yes, if you form a party with 2 people, there will be no problem, because Shin-sama’s rank matches the rank required. Here is the content.”

He took a look at the presented paper.

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Request contents: Cargo guards to Beirun

Client: Nack

Number of recruitment: Up to five people

Rank: E and above(Individual, party, both are acceptable)

Reward: 10 silver coins per person

Note/Remarks: Meals included

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“The departure is three bells(3:00 p.m.) this afternoon. Though two adventurers have already participated, there’s still time. Other than this, I still have available requests for several days…”

“I will confirm with Tiera just in case. Can you hold onto this until she comes back?”

“Yes, I think it’s alright if she comes back soon.”

Nobody else came to accept the request, probably because of the time period. He continued chatting with Celica while holding onto the request. Tiera and Els returned before 10 minutes had passed, and Shin explained the contents of the request.

“I don’t mind. Then, it’s possible to finish our other task ahead of time.”

Tiera didn’t seem to have any problems either. They went out of the guild at once, and went shopping.

The ingredients were bought while walking along the street crowded with other shoppers. Bread was not a food to keep for a long time like dried meat was, but the strong point of the Item Box was that they could buy common ingredients. Basically, ingredients would not spoil if they were put into the Item Box, and they could buy various kinds of fresh food. Looking at the two people choosing fruits and fresh vegetables, no one would imagine that they were about to go on a long journey after this.

By the way, the luggage was already placed into Shin's Item Box, hidden from prying eyes. Still, he didn’t boldly use the Item Box publicly in the middle of the street.

They also bought the items necessary for the trip, like hooded cloaks, insect repellent and so on.

The shopping ended after 30 minutes because there was no limit to their luggage. They still had time until noon.

“The Item Box is too convenient. I have time until the card is done, so what should I do after this?”

Tiera didn’t think it would be over this quickly; it was a little anticlimactic.

“There is a place I want to go to, is that alright with you?”

“It’s fine, where do you want to go?”

“I’d like to go to the orphanage.”

Shin too, was worried about Thoria’s situation over the seat of successor. Sister Rashia had learned the skill 【Purification】, and although the orphanage inheriting requirement had been cleared, the pig bishop* might have interfered with something when he felt that he was losing. *(T/N: Shin’s naming)

“Orphanage? Ah, the place of the person who buys the cake.”

“More of less. I thought of going there, just in case.”

“I understand. I’m interested in the church’s building too. Let’s go there now.”

They faced toward the church, guided by Shin. Did it look forward to meeting Millie? Yuzuha’s tails moved cheerfully to express a happy spirit on top of Shin’s head.

Chapter 1 Part 2

They walked on for several minutes, but the church was still not open and Rashia and Thoria were cleaning the surroundings. When Shin and Tiera entered the church grounds, Rashia, who noticed, ran up to the two people.

“Isn’t it Shin-san! What are you doing today?”

“I came to check up on the situation. How’d the matter in question turn out?”

“Well then, please come to the orphanage. Um, that person is?”

“Ah, My name is Tiera. Nice to meet you.”

“I apologize for not having told you this sooner. I am a sister in this church, and my name is Rashia.”

To Tiera, who introduced herself while feeling a little nervous, Rashia replied with a calm expression. Was there any progress in the talks? The composure she showed now was not imaginable a few days ago.

Though Rashia was surprised about Tiera being an employee of Tsuki no Hokora, since that was the case, it was no problem to lead her into the orphanage.

Shin thought the duties of the church might be delayed, but the church seemed to be closed today. When they arrived at the reception room in the orphanage, Millie was sitting on a sofa for some reason.

“Shin-nii!”

When she realized that it was Shin who entered after Rashia and Tiera, she jumped vigorously. Seeing the state of the girl who was clinging to him with a smile, Shin expected the transfer problem to have been settled.

“Yo, you seem to be happy.”

“The orphanage was not lost! Shin’s help. Thank you!”

She seemed to be in a very good mood as her feelings, which were coming out, were reflected on her expression. For Millie, the possibility of the orphanage possibly being lost would be a big problem.

Shin waited for Millie to settle down and then sat on the sofa, as he had decided to hear the whole story after Tiera had introduced herself again.

“Thanks to Shin-san it was settled that I would take charge of this church as the next priestess without any problems. The official announcement has not yet been publicized, but I think it will be alright unless something extreme happens.”

The priest, who lives in the upper level district where the nobles live, came to the Orphanage a little while ago; he had to confirm whether or not Rashia’s skill acquisition was authentic.

When she was asked how she acquired the skill, she answered that it was the result of training. In fact, because the priest seemed to remember that it was possible to learn skills through training, she didn’t appear to be doubted in particular.

“The children were pleased, too. Really, how can I thank you enough??”

“Since I’ve already received the promised reward, please don’t worry about it too much. Ah, this is a present.”

Because he was worried that she would worry about it too much, he changed the topic by handing over the presents to Thoria. In the middle of shopping, they bought them from a peddler due to its unquestionable quality, though the peddler was surprised because Shin purchased said present in large quantities.

“Is it alright with this many?”

“Because I’ve already bought them, I’d feel rather troubled if they didn’t get accepted. Look, Millie has already taken one.”

Thoria, who reserved herself, was won over, while Millie, who was sitting and pressing Yuzuha to her chest, opened one of the bags filled with candy. When Millie took out an orange candy from it, she put in her mouth without hesitating.

“Sweeet!”

“I’m glad you like it.”

Millie’s smile made everyone around her also smile.

When the reception room calmed down, the sound of a door opening was audible.

“Sensei, is that true that onii-chan has come?”

The one who appeared from the door was the girl who mobbed Yuzuha when Shin came to visit before.

“That’s no good, Melka. Because I’m busy right now.”

“Ehh, but I want to play with onii-chan~”

“Sorry. I’m having an important talk now. I’ll play with you next time.”

“Muuuu, then can onee-chan, play?”

“Eh, me?”

The girl called Melka promptly changed her target to Tiera when she was declined by Shin. Was this because she was together with Shin, or was it women’s intuition? For the little girl, it seemed like Tiera was judged to be a person whom she didn’t need to be cautious around. She had already caught the hem of Tiera’s clothes.

“Um, because it’s my first time coming today, I don’t know the games well…”

“Play?”

“Kuu…”

Looking at Melka staring at Tiera, Shin, while smiling wryly, thought “Can’t refuse that.” With a lisping voice, and upturned eyes, this combo from the little girl required immense willpower to decline. She might be cunning depending on the person, but Tiera, who rarely came into contact with children, shouldn’t be able to resist her.

“Millie, come play too.”

"S-Shin…"

"Sorry, it's impossible."

"T-Traitor~"

Tiera called for help from Shin, but she was taken away by Melka along with Millie after all. Was she unable to just watch anymore? Thoria too followed them to save her.

"Umm, will it be fine?"

"Well, maybe."

Rashia answered as if it was not necessary to stop it. Though it was another matter if it was something good or bad for Tiera, Shin thought it would be a good experience for her to play with children.

"By the way, Wilhelm is…?"

"As usual, he went to investigate the bishop in question. It's unlikely that he's going to leave it as it is."

"As expected, he understands it well."

As an adventurer coming from the orphanage, Wilhelm seemed to gather information in cooperation with fellow adventurers. This way, Shin thought it was improbable for this fellow to be obediently lead by the hand.

"Shin-san also thought the same as Wilhelm?"

"Of course. Though I don't know why the bishop thought of taking over this church, as far as I know after having heard the story, I don't think that guy is willing to give up so easily."

"But it'd good if nothing happens."

" Indeed, that's right. Please hand this to Thoria and Millie just in case though."

Shin took out 2 small accessories from the Item Box and handed them over to Rashia. One of them was similar to the bracelet he gave to Rashia before, and the other one was attached to a light green colored string and was a simple wooden necklace in the shape of a diamond. If one was to say it in a nice way, it had a handmade feeling, and if one was to say it in a rude way, then it looked crappy.

"This is?"

"It grants various magic skills. Just in case."

He then explained what kind of magics were bestowed upon it to answer Rashia's question. Because he had already told her about the damage reduction effect of her own bracelet earlier, it was omitted. The necklace got the main explanation. Although it had a plain appearance, when Rashia heard what kind of material the string and wood were made from, her mind went completely blank for a short while. One of the reasons he chose this material was because it wouldn't stand out among the children in the orphanage compared to if it was a metal necklace.

"What can I say. Just amazing!"

"About Millie's necklace, it has the ability to block her ability. How's it going with the bracelet I gave you before?"

"I'm still wearing it. I don't think it's a good idea for me to continue borrowing it, but Will asked me to wear it. Though I'm intending to return it in the near future."

"No, I'm fine with it as it is. Since the safety of the church isn't settled yet, there is still the possibility of Rashia becoming a target, too. The danger will be minimized if you keep wearing it."

Rather than the problem of the continuation of the orphanage, the possibility of Rashia being aimed at was high. Therefore, besides the accessory for Millie, the bracelets for Rashia and Thoria had considerable abilities, too. They could even stand against a chosen one for a certain period of time.

"Thank you very much for everything."

"You don't have to prostrate yourself that much."

Though she was only half satisfied with the way she had shown her appreciation, the words were stored in her heart.

"Please have lunch with us at the very least. You still have time, right?"

"That's right. Shall we feast?"

She probably wanted to pay back her feelings of gratitude, even if just a little. He nodded to Rashia about lunch, and they proceeded to the square where the children were.

Tiera was surrounded by several young girls, maybe playing with dolls, since some beautiful handmade dolls were placed around her. Yuzuha, who was being mobbed earlier, was seeking refuge on top of Tiera's head. Yuzuha seemed to have learned that no one could touch it when at that location.

In contrast to the young girls, who were happy and joyful, for some reason, the boys were looking at Tiera's group from afar. Although the boys seemed to be kicking around a round ball that looked like a soccer ball, they glanced at the girls too much, especially toward Tiera.

"The boys are kind of quiet, huh?"

"No no, that's a normal reaction."

Shin said while holding his laughter, to Rashia who looked puzzled. She apparently didn't know why the boys didn't approach the girls.

"What do you mean?"

"They are probably too embarrassed to approach because of how beautiful Tiera is."

Though there was a boy who was mixed in with the girls, when Shin looked at him, the boy appeared to be at the age of a child who had just started kindergarten. The boys, who were watching from a distance, were equal to children approaching puberty. When one reached that age, it became difficult to freely talk to an older, beautiful onee-san. That didn't mean that everyone displayed the same behavior, but Shin, who had similar experiences, understood the feeling of wanting to talk but being too embarrassed to do so.

"Tiera-san is indeed beautiful, even from my point of view as a woman, but I don't think it's that hard to call out to her."

"Well, I can understand, because I also experienced similar things as a boy, but it's not strange if you don't understand it, Rashia."

Speaking of similar patterns, there were children in kindergarten who were in love with their teacher, and primary school children who were interested in the onee-san type.

He had a wry smile when he recalled the good old memories as an adult. The world was different, but similar things seemed to happen everywhere. He told the frowning Rashia not to worry about it, and called out to Tiera who was beckoning him.

Tiera, who noticed it, kept evading the eyes from the girls that seemed to be reluctant at parting, and came over to Shin.

“Shi ~ n ~ , how could you abandon me?”

“No, hold on, I just thought that it would be impossible to reject them.”

“That’s… certainly, it was impossible to refuse that. *Sigh* I guess it can’t be helped, huh.”

“Leaving that aside, because I’m treating you to lunch, I want to take out some ingredients. How about it?”

“That’s good. Well, since I promised to make Yuzuha-chan some inarisushi, how about I make it for the children of the orphanage as well? May I borrow the kitchen?”

Even though the sun was already high in the sky, there was still enough time. There was no problem if they overstayed a little.

Tiera also had the 【Cooking】 skill since it was taught to her by Schnee. The eyes of the children were nailed to the inarisushi which was soon displayed on a plate.

“I’m sorry. You’re the one who ended up making it, even though it was me who suggested it.”

“Don’t worry about it, since I’m the one who wanted to do it. Although I said one thing or another, it was fun playing with the children.”

The church seemed to be a place for a tranquil heart, as there were children who could approach without being timid. Even from Shin’s point of view, he had a feeling that Tiera’s expression had become softer than before.

Lunch ended and Shin and Tiera wanted to help put things in order, but Rashia’s words of, “I can’t have you do that” caused them to excuse themselves.

They left the church and returned to the guild. Because it was already past noon at that time, Tiera’s guild card should have been made.

The bar inside of the guild was crowded with adventurers having a meal. They went towards the receptionist area to avoid the crowd, and called out to Celica. Were there few adventurers receiving requests at this time? They were able to talk without even waiting.

“This is Tiera-sama’s guild card. Please check it.”

“There seems to be no problem. Thank you very much.”

Tiera confirmed the card functions without any problems. Shin also took out his own guild card at this point.

“While you’re at it, can you please register us as a party.”

“Understood. In regards to the members, there are only two people, right?”

“Yes, that’s correct.”

In the case of a fixed party, it seemed that the guild required a party name, but they decided to not do it this time.

They were seen off by Celica and Els and left the guild. Their destination was the shopping street again.

This time, they bought preserved foods due to the acquaintances they’d be traveling with on their trip. Because they would be in the presence of others during this trip, the Item Box couldn’t be used lightly. However, since the rations were made into cards and taken along, it didn’t change the quantity compared to the normal preparation for a trip.

Besides that, it might not even be necessary since there was the remarks column in the request that stated that meals were included, but it was for emergencies. ‘Save for a rainy day, save for a time of need’ was thought, and they kept shopping.

“It’s time to go now.”

As they arranged the necessary items they bought, Shin called out to Tiera.

“Eh, but it’s not time yet.”

“No, I’m taking Tsuki no Hokora with us.”

He couldn’t leave Tsuki no Hokora as it was, before the departure.

“I completely forgot about it.”

“That’s not good, forgetting about it, at least.”

“I normally wouldn’t think about forgetting a 『House』, you know!”

That was quite natural. It was crazy to think that a 『House』 could be considered a personal property item.

“S-Sorry. Look, am I not the owner of Tsuki no Hokora? So it’s only natural to think that it could be carried.”

“The old generation is weird after all. Or is Shin particularly strange?”

“That’s cruel!?”

Tiera voiced the question without hesitation with a teasing smile. While receiving the mental damage, Shin took out a light blue crystal from the Item Box.

“What’s that?”

“It’s a 『Crystal Stone』. You’ve never seen one before?”

“That is a Crystal Stone? That one is big and clearly processed, something which I am seeing for the first time right now.”

“This item is bestowed with 『Metastasis』 magic. I can move to a registered point in an instant if I use it. It a disposable one, but with this we can move to Tsuki no Hokora without any effort.”

“…That’s right. The things that Shin pulls out are all unique.”

“That’s rude.”

Did Tiera go beyond being amazed, and arrive at the acceptance state? ‘Shin clearly said that we could move in an instant with the metastasize-crystal.’ .

There were a lot of mages who have tried to reproduce the magic up till now, but they weren’t able to get even a little foothold on it.

This mystery, among the secrets of the old generation, was assumed to have already been lost.

No one would be able to expect things would came out from said item with a pop.

“Shin, I want to check one thing.”

“Ah, ok, what is it?”

“Maybe, just maybe…is it possible to manufacture this?”

Tiera had glossy eyes. It was completely different from the mood from a while ago, and Shin couldn’t hide his bewilderment.

Still, he understood that the item he took out appeared to be the stuff that defied common sense, again.

“Please tell me, before I answer your question, but what would others think about a Crystal Stone with the metastasis ability?”

“…Metastasis, itself, is considered a lost magic.”

“I see.”

Shin understood with those words. If that was the case, he could see why Tiera would be surprised. Even from Shin's experience so far, the Crystal Stone was thought to be quite valuable.

But he frankly found the 'lost' part in Tiera's sentence hard to believe. He was certain that it could have been spread out to the general public, but it seemed like such a thing was likely to have been concealed. It would not be surprising, if even the country and the organization were secretly covering it up.

"Then I will also answer, yes, it's possible to manufacture it. If, and only if, you have sufficient materials."

"…Sigh, I guess so. For one of Rokuten, a Crystal Stone with metastasis is easy to make, huh?"

As she settled with a sigh, Tiera too, seemed to begin to understand what sort of people belonged to the Rokuten guild.

"Ahh, though it seems bad when you are dispirited, may I transfer us now?"

"Yes, do it."

He took the defiant Tiera to an open place with no signs of life. Together with Schnee, he had confirmed that it was usable without problems. It was possible to use it soon after having woken up in this world, but he would rather not take the risk. Unlike other tools, it was unknown what would happen if it failed, so he couldn't bring himself to use that item.

When Shin let magic power flow into the Crystal Stone to act as a detonator, the magic stored inside the stone activated itself. Their vision distorted, and shelves that lined up with goods came into view in the next moment.

The two people were certainly in Tsuki no Hokora.

“T-That’s a strange feeling. And, how are you going to carry this place?”

“Let’s go outside for a moment. Then we can start on that conversation.”

Shin went toward the door as he mumbled a bit. Because Shin turned his back, Tiera didn’t see that Shin’s mouth continued moving.

It was the familiar woods outside of the store as they exited it. Shin glanced around as he surveyed the surrounding area.

There was a green marker which was not there when he came to Tsuki no Hokora before, glowing on the map screen.

“What’s the matter?”

“There’s a rat. I think it’s time to tease that guy a little.”

Shin said that while looking at the trees or at the rat? Tiera had a question mark floating above her head. Though she wanted to retort that he might be looking for a rat in the wrong place, the opponent was Shin. Common sense wouldn’t work anyway, so Tiera stopped questioning it.

Shin finished the preparation, stopped talking to himself, and held up his hand toward Tsuki no Hokora.

“『Storage』!”

Simultaneously with those words, Tsuki no Hokora began to glow faintly. The light extended out to cover the whole store, and in the next moment, the lights were converging into a single point.

It stayed in the air for only a few seconds and then slowly flew and settled in Shin's hand afterward. When the light disappeared, a necklace with a crescent moon shape was grasped in his hand. It shined silver and seemed to be more valuable than its poor artwork showed. The transparent glow was proof that it was not ordinary silverwork.

"This is?"

"Yes, this is Tsuki no Hokora, carry mode."

"You really can carry it! As expected."

Tiera's doubt was answered while he put the necklace away into the Item Box.

Did she tire of getting surprised? Or did she grow accustomed to it? Tiera's words contained pure admiration.

There was no reason to stay forever in a place that had gone, although Tiera looked at the place where the former Tsuki no Hokora was for a while, so they decided to head toward the departure place on the request. It was just the right time. Shin knew this because of the time displayed in the menu screen. Furthermore, it was because he was wearing a wristwatch-like item.

The other two possible applicants had already arrived. Because of that, he planned to have a conversation for a little while. They would participate in the same request for some period of time, so there was no loss in deepening their friendship.

When they entered the country in the direction of the east gate from the Tsuki no Hokora site, in a corner of the plaza before the east gate was where the departure point was located, the wagon upon which the luggage was already loaded had arrived. A group of two people who appeared to be a Dragnil and Lord race were standing on the side.

“Excuse me, this is Nack-san’s wagon, correct?”

“Hmm? That’s right…Oh, both of you adventurers are joining us, right?”

It was the Dragnil who responded. Probably because he had thought words similar prior to joining, they served as confirmation and he therefore called out to him. The blue scales that were covering its whole body gave out a really strong impression. Judging from the deep voice, it was probably a male. The longsword on his waist and the chest protector were made with some kind of skin that stood out. If he didn’t put on that much protective gear, he was probably the type who played around with speed. Or maybe, he probably didn't need much protective gear because the scales were hard enough?

“Yes, we will be going together, although it’s sudden. By the way, I’m Shin. This here is Tiera who is made a party with me.”

“I am Tiera. I hope to get along with you.”

“Yea, my name is Gaien. It is my pleasure to get along with you along the journey. And this one here is——”

“Tsubaki, best regards”

The one who had introduced herself with a few words was a girl with crimson hair that reached her back along with red eyes. The red eyes, which were transparent in contrast to the hair which was darker in color, were observing Shin and Tiera.

Her height was considered short. At least one fist lower than Tiera. Probably about 150 cemels. Though the features were in order, it would not be strange if someone said that she was a high school student only by appearance. However, he had a painful experience because of judging from appearances in the THE NEW GATE.

Since she could work as an adventurer, he judged that they wouldn't have any problems. He was positive that she should at least have an E rank ability.

Gaien's level was 187, and Tsubaki's level was 133. If one judged it only by the level, Gaien might be an A-rank adventurer. The sword on his waist didn't seem to be for decoration.

As for Tsubaki, her level already exceeded rank E.

"Oh! Did additional faces appear? I am Nack the merchant. I hope we get along until Beirun!"

When they introduced themselves to each other, a dwarf showed up from the shadow of the wagon and started talking. Apparently, this person seemed to be the client of the request. The muscular body which differed from the usual Dwarf, was wrapped in well-tailored clothes, which gave off the feeling that something was wrong. They properly exchanged greetings, and boarded the wagon in order.

"Everyone has gotten aboard. It's a little early, but let's depart!"

Nack's voice was cheerful while the whip slash was heard from the driver seat, and the wagon started to move slowly.

As the wagon with 5 people passed through the east gate, it began to advance straight north, to Beirun.

Afterwards, the news of the disappearance of Tsuki no Hokora made the higher-ups of Bayreuth Kingdom arrive at the pinnacle of the confusion. It would be a story for the future before Shin and the others knew it.

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The disappearance of Tsuki no Hokora.

That information was not only known to the upper echelon of the Bayreuth Kingdom, but it was spread out even to the other countries, which were monitoring Tsuki no Hokora, in a flash.

Initially, everyone had to confirm whether it was a mistake. For more than 500 years, preceding the Dusk of the Majesty, the immovable building existed without change. People couldn't invade it no matter how powerful they were, it didn't permit any high-level monsters to invade, not even a single step. It was the secret shop that was made with lost technology, that was Tsuki no Hokora. When it was said to have disappeared, it was impossible to believe it so easily.

However, after verifying it many times, the only answer was: "No doubt about it". The side that received the report was still good. At the actual scene, the shock of the people seeing Tsuki no Hokora vanish before their eyes, was also indirectly affecting the superior who heard the news from far away. At this point, a strange situation occurred, where the spies who monitored Tsuki no Hokora revealed themselves in broad daylight, and ascertained each other whether the scene they just saw was true.

“What the heck just happened!?”

It was their superior who was shouting.

It was noisy in a corner inside a castle.

They had gathered in a meeting room, talking about the important matter at hand. Although they were roused up from bed before the first sunshine appeared on the horizon, no lack of sleep appeared on their faces. To begin with, there was no such margin for that, except one part.

“Well then, there is no mistake in that report after all?”

“Yes, there’s no doubt about it.”

The one who asked from that place, where the head of the table sat, was the King of Bayreuth Kingdom, Jeon Courtade Bayreuth. With blond hair, blue eyes, and 2 mels of height covered with muscles; this person had the body of a warrior.

By all means, it was a splendid king who clad himself with dignity as the ruler of his body, but it wasn’t going so well today. The agony-clad expression on Jeon face made even the prime minister worry about whether they should continue answering his questions or not. This time, it was not just a problem for Bayreuth Kingdom. Let alone the neighboring countries, an inquiry would surely come from the Empire and Imperial if they did a bad job.

“Tsuki no Hokora…Disappeared…huh?”

Everyone who gathered had a dark complexion.

The one who was, more or less, better off was the first princess, the royal magician. Jeon saw the report while knowing that it would not change no matter how many times he read it. Here was the summary.

--Report About the Disappearance of Tsuki no Hokora--

Fourth month, second day.

At the sound of the 12th bell, that indicated it was noon, all of sudden the Tsuki no Hokora begin to emit light.

After a few seconds, when the light settled, Tsuki no Hokora was already gone.

The spies for each nation were confused about the sudden occurrence, too.

This caused the situation where we mutually contacted each other.

There was no reaction from the skill detection system, though we did investigate the hollowed-out mark left in the ground.

Again, there was no sign of anything happening in the surroundings either.

The whole occurrence was a complete mystery.

The people who were assigned to the monitoring job jotted down the details of what they saw in the report. It was written as detailed as possible, even though the amount of sentences were few. It was not possible to report it any further, as they didn’t have much information.

The spies of the other countries in the vicinity whom they exchanged information with and of whom they should be wary of, understood the disordered state of the site well. It was that crazy.

However, they didn’t want to go back without understanding anything. Even though Tsuki no Hokora did not belong to Bayreuth Kingdom, it was almost next to them. They took pride in having a more intimate relation with the shop than any other country.

“Do you know what happened to Raizar-dono?”

“No, however the second princess, Rionne-sama has reported that she came into contact with her in the Wraith Plains. Because of the considerable distance, it is the only place to think of when Tsuki no Hokora disappeared.”

“I see. There’s no mistake if Rionne said so, but…as long as Raizar-dono does not have some problem, she will at least show up for the distribution of the spoils of war several days later, because if Raizar-dono is healthy, it should spread to the many countries.”

Even if Tsuki no Hokora disappeared, if Schnee Raizar was alive and well, it should not become a lethal problem. The important one was not the building, but the person who lived there.

“Tell Rionne that when Raizar-dono appears, she is to report it with Mind Chat immediately. That’s an order!”

"Roger!"

He passed on an order to one of the soldiers who was standing guard, and left. There were a few of the old generation who served the king, and every one of them was currently in the midst of gathering information by Mind Chat. Jeon had to change his plan, as there was no other way, even though it put a strain on his information network.

And then, because the disappearance of Tsuki no Hokora had never happened before, he ordered an investigation.

~~

Let's rewind back the time a little to the previous day.

While Shin and the others who left the kingdom were jolted about in a wagon, they confirmed each other's hands. They confirmed what they were able to do and what they couldn't do, because it might cause a delay in judgement in the case of an emergency. It was mainly confirming each others job and rank, also whether having the ability to use magic or not. The level and way of fighting could be understood roughly with this. Since there was the danger of revealing level and trump cards during the first meeting, it might be concealed somehow or another.

"As you can see, I am a samurai. Adventurer rank is A. I can use charms to some extent, but I don't not want to rely on it very much." (T/N: Gaien uses "sessha" to refer to himself)

It was Gaien who gave information about himself first. It seemed he was an A-rank adventurer after all. His equipment itself was unrelated to his job. So when he said "As you can see" with his current state of not wearing a kimono, no one could have guessed it without

【Analyze】. Samurai was a vanguard job, it was natural that they didn't use much magic as they didn't get an occupation bonus for that. As for expecting a proper magic attack, the rear guard jobs that get an occupation bonus (in INT/WIS) commonly used those.

"I am a fist fighter. Rank is E. I can use a little support magic to raise agility."

The next one who opened her mouth was Tsubaki. Her level seemed to be befitting of a rank D, but it appeared that she had only newly joined the guild. Incidentally, he was told that she was going to be rank D very soon.

"I am more or less an alchemist, but I can use a bow and dagger…if I have to… I just registered to become an adventurer, so my rank is G. I can use water and wind magic arts and create simple recovery medicines, if necessary, please call out to me…"

Tiera, who almost spoke in formal lines, did so partly because it was their first meeting. Though it was a great difference from when she met Shin in Tsuki no Hokora for the first time.

It was Gaien who suggested first to speak casually, so they didn't have to pay attention to their wording. Since they had to entrust their lives to each other, and there was no objections, which lead to the present.

Even though she was worried about having a low-level and rank, her recovery medicine was reassuring, Gaien and Tsubaki encouraged Tiera who was feeling a little small.

In reality, it was very difficult to consume a potion during a battle. Though the story was different when there are a lot of people, there were many situations where there was only a little bit of time when hunting a dangerous monster. For the few adventurers who fight regularly, having an ally who could cast recovery magic could make a big difference in the survival rate.

“I am similar to Gaien, a samurai. Rank E. I can use a little fire and lightning magic. And this is Yuzuha. Even though it might appear this way, this is an excellent monster.”

Shin told them about himself and Yuzuha. Including Tiera, he didn’t forget to inform them that they did a guarding-type job for the first time, too. This was because experience could be the factor which makes the difference between life or death. He was not asked for his level this time, but if he was, he ought to pretend that it was low. Because he didn’t know what surprise it would cause, if he carelessly said that his level exceeded 200. When one thinks of Shin’s age, it was indeed too abnormal.

Just in case, he had already arranged beforehand to tell the same story as Tiera. Of course, he had already forbidden Celica, who knew the circumstances, from speaking about it, too.

For Yuzuha, he talked about it being contracted by the tamer contract, and informed them that there was no danger.

“Oh, you can use magic while being a samurai, huh? I didn’t hear about it in detail, but it seemed that doing so requires extraordinary training. It is also unusual to have tamed a monster.”

“Well, that’s that. I’d be troubled if you expect me to be at the magician level. I only use it for diversions and surprise attacks to a certain degree. Yuzuha, by the way, is unexpectedly strong, right?”

“Kuu!”

Although these diversions were a far cry from the instant kills he could produce if he was serious, it seemed to be moderate for a rank E.

Since for a vanguard to use magic was enough, Gaien and Tsubaki should not have high expectations, like magician level, either.

“Are you people coming from Hinomoto?”

“We’re not, but why do you think so?”

“Almost all people from Hinomoto are samurais. This is the first time that I’ve met a samurai other than Gaien.”

Shin looked puzzled at Tsubaki’s question, but understood it after hearing the reason. Even though Shin had also collected information via the 【Analyze】 and【Listen】skills, finding a person who had the samurai job was nearly impossible. That was probably why Tsubaki said that it was unusual. But, it didn’t mean that Shin had never seen one. When he was walking toward the guild for the first time, the Dragnil he saw wearing a long sword at his waist was actually Gaien.

“Usually it is a warrior or knight one sees in this country. And then there is the job specialization. A lot of the people who are aiming to be a samurai are oddballs.”

“Oddballs!? That’s absurd… because it is a job that is excellent for raids…”

In a basic strategy, it is a hit and run job that deals out a heavy blow while playing around with speed, but the samurai could also tank if equipped with warrior armor.

The job that was popular in the game era regardless of generation seems to be different in this world.

“That is probably because the prerequisite is the necessity to master both the knight and berserker jobs.”

“Ah… I see.”

Shin consented to Gaien after hearing the reason.

In the game specification, one needed to have two jobs, knight and berserker, to become a samurai. The requirements seemed to be identical in this world.

On one hand, a knight put emphasis on defence, and on the other hand, a berserker put emphasis on attack. Mastering two contradicting jobs was the reason that samurai were known to be able fight versatile. That was the reason a samurai was easy to use. Although there was high compensation, Tsubaki seemingly found it difficult to understand somehow or other.

“I understand it, but to put it bluntly, it’s strong?”

“I agree on that point, but it’s strange after all.”

Then Gaien interrupted the conversing Tsubaki and Shin.

“Either way, it’s the difference in cultures. Hinomoto is an island country that was formed by a natural disaster. There are some bases of the guild where people with jobs like samurai and shinobi gathered at that time. Those people played a key role and made it possible for the country to be established. For that reason, the people who now use their body to fight for Hinomoto have a strong admiration for samurai. The country is regarded as a curiosity, even though it is quite small compared to the countries on the continent, so only a few people come near it. I, personally, was often puzzled in various ways after I left the island.”

The guild that Gaien talked about appeared to be different from the current adventurers’ guild. Hearing the story, it seemed to be the one from the game age.

Shin felt like it was too good to be true when he heard about an island country filled with samurai.

“By the way, what are the names of the guilds that founded the country?”

“Hmm, what is generally known as their pursuit of natural beauty, the ‘Dark Child Shrine’.”

“H-Heh, it that so?”

Shin showed understanding with an ‘I see’, without putting it into words.

The guild that Gaien mentioned, with a Japanese style name, represented by samurai and shinobi, was formed by people who liked the Japanese clothes, such as the shrine maiden clothing. In that guild, the samurai, shinobi, and miko(shrine maiden), ordered sequentially by the highest number, were competing for power. The guild house was a castle, needless to say a Shinto shrine, and consisted of many eccentric players. Because the armed forces that protected the guild house consisted of only support characters, they might have been able to repel monsters even if the players disappeared. Shin thought that if they cooperated, they should have the ability to govern a small country.

"In addition, there seemed to be some small guilds, too, but I don't remember it well."

"I understand it well, thank you."

He didn't know that the country had originally been a guild in the game era. Possibly, there might be a lot of surprises there.

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They exchanged various information while being jolted around in the wagon for a few days. The party advanced smoothly without being attacked by monsters, and because it was a Grimm horse, a demon beast, that pulled the wagon, their speed was twice as fast as normal. By the way, this Grimm horse was the one that Shin saw at the gate, when he had visited Bayreuth for the first time. The Tamer, who he caught a glimpse of when entering the gate at that time, was Nack who was doing this request. A merchant with the sub-job Tamer could pull a wagon in the same way as players did in the game era.

Shin and the others decided to take turns watching the surrounding, and those who could take the position of coachman took over for Nack alternately as they continued traveling.

It was when Nack had just taken his turn to be the coachman that the sign for enemies was displayed in Shin's perception range.

"Something is coming. And it's fast."

"What? Tell me in detail."

"There are 12 bodies ahead. Judging from the number and speed, it might be a wolf pack, but..."

Though Shin knew the full details, he simply told them some speculation, because it would be troublesome if he told them too much.

“That alone is plenty of notice. You guys! It’s time to work!”

When Nack heard about the situation from Shin, he immediately raised his loud voice, before Shin had finished talking. As expected from a former adventurer, his courage resounded through the air. It was so loud that if a person was asleep, they would jump up to their feet. However, his words sounded more like that of a bandit than a merchant.

When his voice rose, Gaien and Tsubaki were already finished preparing. Tiera too was holding her bow, and confirming the quiver position. Apparently Gaien had also perceived the signs.

“It’s a wolf group as Shin said. I’m worried about there being no movement from the 2 animals at the rear, but first, let’s take care of the 10 animals in the lead.”

“I’m thinking the same thing. If they are willing to approach a Grimm horse pulling a wagon, then I know that they are not ordinary beasts.”

Shin, who heard Gaien and Nack exchange opinions, looked at the monsters’ details that were coming up.

The monsters’ name was Jag Wolf. It was twice as big as a normal wolf, an extremely aggressive monster. Their movement speed was in a different league compared to ordinary wolves. Ten of them were coming toward Shin and the others. Their average level was around 100, with one of them at level 120. This one was probably the leader of the pack. As for the two that were staying behind, their level didn’t even reach level 10. They might have been left behind because of the danger.

3 out of 10 Jag Wolves went ahead of the pack. The rest of them divided into two to go to the right and left, scattering between the trees successively, while the leading three, including the leader, were getting closer approaching.

The road where the wagon was on right now was caught within in the forest. They seemed to intend to perform a surprise attack using the forest as cover. Gaien appeared to grasp the position of the approaching enemy, immediately deciding the arrangement without Shin having to suggest it.

“Split into the left and right. I will hold the front. Shin to the right, Tsubaki to the left. Tiera, give support from the top of the wagon. Nack-dono, stay near the horse. I think it won’t go wild if a tamer is nearby.”

“There’s no turning back in this situation. Come on!!”

Nack stopped the wagon at a relatively wide section, and each of them was given a position to hold. Yuzuha stayed beside the Grimm horse, just in case.

“Here we go!!”

Gaien’s shout was the signal as the three leading wolves showed movement. The center one sprang forward from the front and the remaining two went to his left and right.

Gaien, with a longsword in his right hand and the sheath in his left, charged to the front.

"Nuun!!"

Something like a light blue aura covered Gaien's body as the Jag Wolf approached, flicking away the large beast.

Delayed with a short pause, the other two Jag Wolves approached. Without Gaien panicking, he sliced at the jaw of the beast on the right by brandishing a large swing and jumped to his left, where the one on that side received a hit on its mouth and thereby silenced.

The remaining Jag Wolf, which had been pushed off, saw its companions get defeated in an instant, and was disheartened.

"Mu, it's somewhat easy."

He scowled at the lightness of the resistance, but he didn't need to go all out if the opponent was weak, so Gaien concentrated his attention on the approaching leader.

"As expected. By the way, there are some coming here, too."

"The left side is quick. Do you see it from above?"

To Shin's warning, which perceived the Jag Wolf approaching from the forest, Tsubaki answered and asked Tiera.

"I caught it!"

Tiera was already aiming at the fastest one and shot the arrow into the forest.

A howl of pain was heard from the point that the arrow landed at, and one of the markers displayed on Shin's map disappeared.

"Did you actually kill it?"

As Tiera was relieved, Tsubaki voiced some admiration.

"I did."

Shin thought she couldn't kill it in one shot when he thought about the level differences, but the Jag Wolf seemed to have run out of energy unexpectedly. It might have hit a vital point.

Was it because they received an unexpected counterattack on the left side? The Jag Wolves turned back to where the leader was.

"It went back, huh? Tsubaki, please go support Gaien. Tiera and I are enough to hold this position."

"I understand."

As Tsubaki moved according to Shin's instruction, a Jag Wolf jumped out from the forest on the right. The claw attack of the Jag Wolf passed through next to Shin, and moved toward where Nack was. The attack towards Shin appeared to have been a feint.

But, it was too careless to have thought that it was able to outwit Shin to that degree.

Shin twisted his body to dodge the Jag wolf's claw and at the same time, pulled out a katana to parry. The one he pulled out from the scabbard hanging at his waist was the longsword katana which he had forged in Tsuki no Hokora before. A single attack from a sword that was at a similar level to an average Magic Sword; it traced a white line in the air and the Jag Wolf's neck was cut into two.

As the body fell over, Shin thought that his physical ability rose proportional to his kinetic vision, but he only had time to observe the Jag Wolf. And then he felt that something was wrong.

While thinking about the source of that uncomfortable feeling, Shin perceived another Jag Wolf approaching. The Jag Wolf probably didn't want to waste an ally's sacrifice, as its fangs were already out when Shin turned his eyes. It was at a close enough of a distance for Shin to quickly counterattack with his sword.

But an arrow pierced the forehead of the Jag Wolf before he could swing the katana. Seeing the wolf receive a mortal wound, Shin dodged with a sway as the Jag Wolf fell past him due to the momentum from its leap, and then he turned toward Tiera.

"Nice follow-up!"

"It's not nice, geez."

Tiera, who shot the arrow, breathed out as she was relieved, and nocked the next arrow.

Instant sniping was quite a sight to behold. No matter how one looked at it, that was not a move a newly fledged adventurer should know. Schnee training her was really not just for show.

"If you can do that kind of movement, you would have no problem at rank E. Go cover the other side quickly!"

"Tsubaki also said something similar. Well, I got it."

They shifted their attention forward as Gaien and Tsubaki fought against five of the wolves, including the leader. Did Tsubaki use magic to raise her agility, as she mentioned earlier? Her body was enveloped with a thin white aura while she was trifling with the Jag Wolves.

“Haa!!”

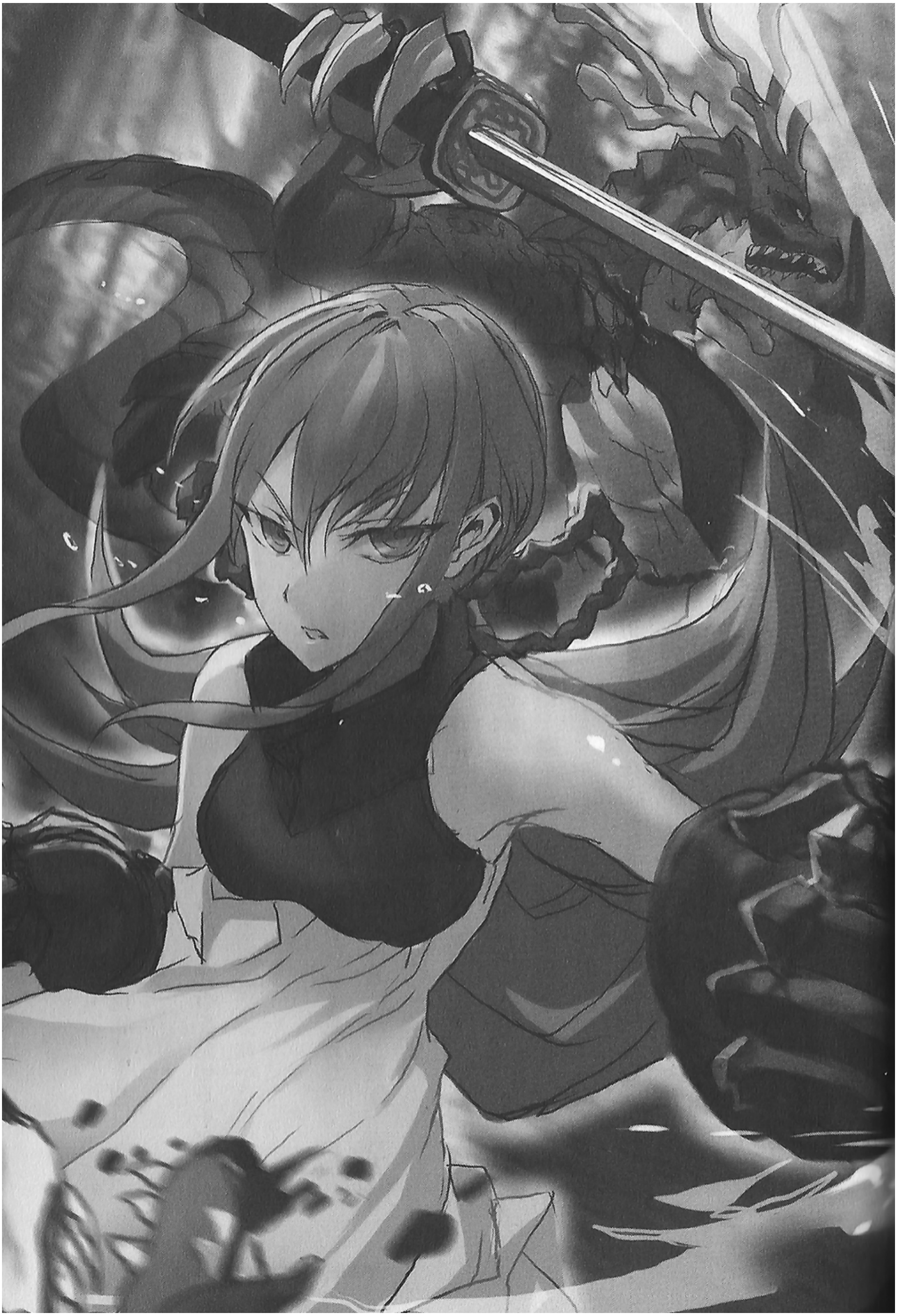
One of the wolves was unable to keep up with her pace and received a direct hit from her fist and vanished.

Tsubaki’s radiant blunt gauntlet sunk into its body, and it was thrown off at the tree while bending back and forth, without moving. It was a scene that would make one question where that power came from, with such a thin arm.

Tsubaki’s level was 133. There was nearly a 30 level difference compared to the Jag Wolf; even so, she gave off a feeling of power.

“This is strange. These fellows’ movements are rather slow.”

“Agreed. Their reactions are pretty mild.”



While Gaien muttered that while throwing an enemy down into the ground, Tsubaki also agreed. Apparently everyone seemed to have felt that something was wrong.

Shin joined in and it became 3 against the remaining 3 members of the pack, including the leader. They didn't show any behavior of turning their backs at all. Normally, they should have already tried to run away.

"Hey, don't these fellows look a bit thin?"

Shin said as he noticed it when the other two people spoke of a sense of incongruity. The Jag Wolf appeared to show its ribs if one looked closely, even the leader as well.

"It's like the demon essence affected these monsters somehow or another. They probably aimed for the Grimm horse because of its meat and demon essence. That certainly explains the lack of resistance I felt a while ago."

Gaien nodded when he understood it, without dropping his guard against the Jag Wolf.

There were monsters that were born from the demon essence's influence, and wild beasts that became monsters due to the demon essence. The former could live on demon essence alone, but the latter was different. They had to eat meat and could not just absorb demon essence to maintain their bodies. The majority of these latter types often attacked people and domestic animals, but it didn't get much public attention, because the former have such a strong demon essence. Gaien explained the situation on the way. As for Shin, since he didn't remember in detail how the monsters spawned during the game, he memorized it for future reference.

"It is prepared for death as there's nowhere for it to go."

Tsubaki said it plainly. Even for the monsters in this world, they had to be strong to exist. Before the rule of the survival of the fittest, all living things were equal. There was no line dividing the humans and monsters here.

It must be remembered that Shin's and the others' request was to guard the wagon. If it ran away, they would not chase after the wolf, but they could not help but kill it if it continued to attack.

The choices left for the Jag Wolves was either to die starving or to die fighting.

"We are also risking our life for this. Shin, it's useless to hold back."

"I understand."

Shin answered him briefly, as this was not the first time he fought a monster to live.

However, he had never met such a desperate opponent prior to this time.

(The resolution is different from the previous guys. Though that's the only difference, it couldn't have done that so easily.)

It was not about challenging a strong opponent, nor the hunt or fight.

It fought to live.

To the extent that the pressure they received was remarkably different.

(Moreover, the two of them that are behind it are still pups.)

The two that were approaching little by little were still children with the shapes of puppies.

Was it because he was a Japanese person, that his blade was getting blunt?

“I will kill the leader. Tsubaki on the right, Shin on the left.”

“Understood.”

“Roger that.”

“Then…let’s go!!”

The timing was matched to each other.

Tsubaki and Shin were the first to begin.

Tsubaki stepped into the fight with her aura continuing as it was. Judging from the Jag Wolf’s point of view, it felt like there was a chance of being cut down if it blinked. To the opponent, which froze by reflex, Tsubaki swung down her fist without mercy.

The Jag Wolf slammed into the ground with a cracking sound, and then twitched a few times before it stopped moving.

Shin also took a stance and raising his sword above his head, stepped in with a speed superior to Tsubaki’s. The katana swung down as he stepped forward. The Jag Wolf didn’t move. No, it was not possible for it to move.

At the same time as the arc in the air disappeared, its body slipped diagonally. The eyes of the Jag Wolf blinked a few times as it turned toward Shin. It might not even have noticed the cut.

“Then after you.”

“Umu, agreed.”

Gaien stepped forward between Shin and Tsubaki. The reason why the leader didn’t attack Shin and Tsubaki was because Gaien had overpowered it.

There was no longer a chance of winning. Still, the Jag Wolf leader didn’t back down. It raised a short howl and put its strength into its limb. Its intention to live was straightforward. Even if he thought it was hopeless, Shin felt a sense of respect for that figure.

The leader exerted its power for a few seconds. In its last dash, it squeezed out all of its strength, aiming at Gaien. The speed was as expected from the alpha of a pack; powerful.

“Magnificent.”

It was Gaien who spoke words of praise. He prepared his longsword while facing the oncoming leader.

For the leader, which was approaching straight, Gaien moved calmly. The figure of Gaien wavering, with his feet side-stepping.

The moment of their clash. In the next moment, along with Gaien’s swung down sword, there was the figure of the leader split in two.

While waving the blood off of his blade, Gaien turned his eyes toward the last, small Jag Wolves ahead.

“What should we do?”

How would a person of this world make such a decision at this time. To find out the answer to that question, Shin called out to Gaien.

“I will kill them if they attack, but I won’t give chase if they decide to leave. Our work is to guard, not to hunt monsters. In any case, I don’t know whether it’s possible for those two children to survive on their own.”

In case they survived, they might get attacked by someone else. However, that was for another story. If they appeared outside a village in this world, it was a common sense to employ a bodyguard or to learn some self-defense. They might get attacked by other monsters or even by bandits in either case. Even if they killed the Jag Wolf children here, the possibility of someone else attacking the wagon, as well as themselves, didn’t decrease.

The children might have understood that their parents had died. They disappeared into the forest to escape.

“Somehow, it leaves a bad aftertaste in the mouth.”

“It was different from a fight against common monsters, huh.”

Shin nodded to Tiera’s words.

“I share your sympathy. I’ve never experienced such a fight before.”

Gaien consented.

“But it’s not good to mind it too much either.”

What Tsubaki said was right; if they worried about it too much and thereby let it dull their blades, a companion might be sacrificed next. They had to be practical.

“Is it over? Then let’s hurry up and leave.”

Nack, who was near the Grimm horse, called out to the four people. As expected from an elderly former adventurer, he changed gears quickly. He was not shaken to see the scene from a little while ago either.

“Still, for them not to eat to get thinner, there must be something in the forest, right?”

Gaien then answered Shin’s question.

“Well, there’s nothing I can add. Jag Wolves are smart monsters. It’s hard to think that they failed at hunting until they reached such a condition.”

“Even if the food supply diminished?”

“These guys also eat goblins. It unreasonable to think that the goblins were swept away, right?”

“I agree. If one of them was found, 30 of them would come out.”

Tsubaki said it in a way that was like saying a G* was lurking in the house. After all, the goblins’ reproductive power didn’t seem to have changed, just like in the game era. (E/N: G = cockroaches, ‘cause Goblins are like cockroaches)

“I heard a story that said Skull Faces were appearing in large numbers in the Wraith Plains. Wouldn’t that have an influence?”

When Tsubaki said that, Shin opened his mouth as he suddenly remembered.

“Ah, that reminds me, I overheard that all high-rank adventurers are away the guild, wasn’t there something like a large-scale request?”

“That matter, huh? At that time, I was going to go home for a few days before, at Bayreuth’s southern town with Tsubaki. So I didn’t participate there.”

Then Tiera secretly whispered into Shin’s ear.

“(Hey Shin)”

“(What’s the matter?)”

“(The Skull Faces, was that the request that came to master?”

“(Yes, those fellows were quite strong. That might be the cause.)”

There was the possibility that their territory was overflowing with Skull Faces.

“Either way, we don’t know the reason. It’s useless even if we think about it. So I’m going to go to sleep.”

Doing things at her own pace, Tsubaki said that and put on her overcoat. It was typical for adventurers to be able to sleep in a shaking wagon. Because there were shifts between being coachman and standing guard, it was an important duty to rest while one can.

“It’s as Tsubaki said. There’s not enough information even if we think about it. Since that took a significant amount of time.”

“That’s right. For the time being, should I do maintenance on our weapons? What are you going to do, Tiera?”

“Because it’s my turn soon, I will be at the coachman box.”

When Tiera said so, she exited the canopy, and moved next to Nack.

According to Schnee, Tiera learned most of the necessary skills for an adventurer, so she could take the role of coachman without any problems. Rather, it was Shin who didn’t have the experience. That was because a horse could advance without him having to guide it when he set the direction in the game, so he was not used to doing such things.

“What adventurer can’t drive a wagon? Even a young woman can do it.”

“Ugh…”

Even though they were just simple words, what Nack said made him feel a little down.

Chapter 1 Part 3

Afterwards, they advanced without another incident and went toward Beirun while camping. They had to take a detour around the forest surrounding the Wraith Plains, not only merchants such as Nack, but large scale caravans did the same, too. Thus, not a lot of monsters came near them from the start. The reason was that, there was already plenty of prey inside of that forest. And one day before they were due to arrive in Beirun, Shin and the others encountered what they were asked to defend the caravan against.

“Poor merchant-san. If you don’t want to die, hand over the money and baggage.”

They were bandits.

Though according to the information Shin and Tiera exchanged with Gaien and Tsubaki, bandits seldom came out; they did not seem to have any luck. It goes without saying whose ‘luck’ it was.

They were not a numerous group, but they were properly armed in leather armor and were holding longswords as well, which was likely to earn them money. Though one might not want to know how.

“Then, how? I don’t know if I’m confident enough to ambush and take on 6 people head-on all alone, what should I do?”

Shin looked back at Gaien and Tsubaki.

“That won’t change anything. If we attack, they might turn the table.”

“One person should leave the right to slay someone with impunity to me.”

Ignoring Tsubaki’s remark, which they didn’t know whether she was joking or not, the three people moved out.

The strategy had already been decided. They formed a basic formation with three people, where Shin, Gaien, and Tsubaki stepped forward, while Tiera was to cover them. Yuzuha was left in the wagon in case there was an opponent they couldn’t perceive.

The enemies level were about 150 on average, although the man who started to talk was unexpectedly higher-leveled at 163. Shin was a little surprised by that. They could make a living as normal adventurers, but he thought that they might have had various things happen to them to make them stay like that. No matter how much he thought about it, it wouldn’t change anything.

Nack as well this time, held an axe for self-defense.

It was only a matter of time before the battle began. While the tension increased, Tiera was holding her breath inside the canopy, and recalled what Gaien asked earlier.

‘Shin, Tiera. Have you ever killed someone?’

When the trip first began, it was the first question that Gaien had asked of the two people. Even though this was the first barrier that adventurers aimed to strike at, it was because the request for the guard was an E rank request. Therefore the possibility that an enemy related to this request would appear existed. The mortality rate was divided by each rank for adventurers; high rank requests at rank B and above had a much higher mortality rate. Aside from monsters, many of them were killed by people. It was a rank E.

(It’s alright. I will defeat them.)

Only Tiera hadn't killed anyone yet among the members. Shin’s worrying about this was reflected on his expression, but she said it would be alright. She ought to do it. If she couldn’t do it, the danger toward the three people stepping forward increased.

“Oioi, do you intend to fight with only three people? There’s still time now?”

“Shall you leave the young lady too? I can entertain her in a bunch of various ways!”

The stinging lines from the bandits was heard by the three people. Of course, it was only natural.

“Shin…”

While looking at such three people, it was Shin’s name that came out from Tiera’s mouth. Tiera’s sensitivity was particularly strong even among the elves. That’s why she understood it. Just after the bandit said to leave Tsubaki behind, the feeling from Shin changed a little.

It didn’t change to bloodlust. But it became sharp and dark. The calm presence that Tiera knew vanished, as she felt some kind of sinister feeling coming from Shin. From Tiera’s perspective, it was already another person’s presence. Was Tiera not keen enough? Neither Gaien nor Tsubaki seemed to have noticed it. Be it fortunate or not, it was only Tiera who felt the change to the present Shin.

(I can’t leave Shin like that any further. That Shin is no good!)

The hand holding the bow filled with power.

Before she knew it, Tiera’s thoughts of killing without hesitation, disappeared from her head. The opponent was a bandit, and in addition to that, he was obviously a habitual criminal. To be a bandit repeatedly in this world was equal to having a worthless life. There were no other destinations except the execution stand if caught. For such opponents, to compare them with Tiera’s worry for Shin, their existence itself was already too light.

The arrow was nocked in the bowstring, which in turn was drawn to the limit. She aimed at the bandit lurking in the bushes nearby. That person might have had the intention to hide, but it was no different than casually going for a walk for the elf Tiera. While aiming, she waited for the signal from Gaien.

“I don’t like useless killing. I will stop if you pull back, but I will kill if you don’t.”

“Oioi, can you see the situation? I know that one is merely a rank E.”

“No matter how much of a rank A you are, don’t you have to fight while protecting other members? You better turn a blind eye to us without causing trouble rather than showing off that strange spirit, don’t you agree?”

Where did they learn that information from? The bandits knew that they were all low-rank with the exception of Gaien. Even though the number of bandits hidden and visible aiming at Nack were unknown, it was clear that this was not an accidental encounter.

"There's no need to listen any."

"Leave the number of people to two."

Shin and Tsubaki made eye contact. The negotiations broke down. No one here thought it would end any other way. They only wanted time to prepare so as to lessen the damage while observing the other side.

Gaien shook his head a little, reacting to Shin's and Tsubaki's remark. That was the starting signal for the attack.

In the next moment, an arrow shot by Tiera flew out from inside the canopy, and was sucked up into the thicket where the bandit hid in.

"——!!?"

There was no scream. However, a dull sound of something hitting the ground was audible.

One red marker that existed on Shin's map disappeared. Was it the head or the heart? It might have hit one of the two. The HP vanished in a single blow. It was an instant death.

"Tsk, what a failure. You guys, do something!!"

The leader appeared to curse, far from mourn over the death of their comrade. The bandits rushed to attack after they received their instructions.

"Then, two bandits per person. Leave the person alone if you can't do it. You heard the story."

"With no injuries?"

“You should listen to the directions, do as you like to the others, I don’t care.”

Gaien and Tsubaki calmly exchanged disturbing words. It was as if they were used to it. Even though there was sure to be a level difference between Tsubaki and the enemies, she didn’t seem to be eager at all.

Gaien stayed as he was, and Shin and Tsubaki scattered to the right and left, distracting the bandits.

Three bandits were going for Gaien, one for Tsubaki, and two for Shin. Was there any 【Analyze】 skill holder among them? The low-level was after Tsubaki rather than Gaien.

“Are you making fun of me?”

Anger was mixed in with Tsubaki’s words. The bandit whom she faced was certainly stronger than Tsubaki when one only looked at levels. Still, just because the bandit was stronger didn’t mean that they would be able to knock her down easily.

A chill ran through the back of Tsubaki’s neck, to place where the she thought the bandit hid his hand. She immediately close the distance, caught and pulled the bandit’s sword with her gauntlet.

“Heh, you have some nice intuition, don’t you?”

The man looked at her, like he was making light of Tsubaki’s body. Red aura was being released from the sword grasped in her right hand.

She shifted her gaze and saw the surrounding state. All of the bandits, though the colors were different, had weapons that gave off an aura like the man in front of Tsubaki. Did all the members have a Magic

Sword, they appeared to have weapons with similar characteristics.

Apparently, besides from the level, there also seemed to be a reliable chance of success due to the equipment.

“Don’t put up much resistance. I can’t enjoy it if I kill you, kukuku”

The bandit noticed that Tsubaki’s gauntlet was just a common mass-produced item. It was not possible to defend with this. Therefore, he had no doubt about his superiority.

“If you see me as being only small, you’ll experience pain for looking down on me.”

“Haa, say that after you defeat me!!”

The bandit lunged at her while speaking. Was the attack aided by the sword? Obviously the speed level was faster than before. However, Tsubaki didn’t lose. She was enveloped in a white aura and ran before the bandit arrived at her position. The real nature of the aura was 【Spirit Manipulation • Katsusen】.

As the name implied, it is a martial art skill that strengthens the body, although an inferior version. As for the ‘Katsusen’ that was attached there, aside from body strengthening, it indicated that it specialized in speed increase.

Tsubaki left a white afterimage and jumped toward the bandit’s chest, and drew back her fist. Though the bandit was surprised that Tsubaki’s speed was faster than his own, he judged that it was not possible to clash with it, and instead tried to guard with his hand that wasn’t holding the sword.

But Tsubaki's aim was not to deal damage. She aimed at the hand that was holding the sword. The bandit's reaction was good, but he didn't read Tsubaki's aim until after it happened. The fist wrapped in her gauntlet directly hit the bandit's right hand, breaking all five of his fingers. Bones poked out from the bandit's fingers, as they bent in the wrong direction.

"Even if you have a good weapon, you are untrained."

No matter if his weapon was a Magic Sword or not, the user's ability didn't change. The bandit, who was screaming intensely, couldn't defend because of the excessive pain. In front of that virtually defenseless enemy, Tsubaki accumulated power in an instant.

"——Fly!"

Her fist was released along with that word. At the same time, a dull sound that wasn't supposed to come from the body was heard. The bandit was sent flying off into the sky while continuously vomiting blood.

Beyond that point, there were figures of bandits surrounding Gaien.

"Gahaa!!"

Without any time to react, the bandit who was sent flying crashed into one of them, and disappeared into the thicket. Because the sound of heads-butting together was heard, the person who was thrown would probably not move for a while.

The bandit who was hit again had the pit of his chest cave in, so that rather than his intestines, it was certain that his heart had exploded. It was an instant death similar to the person who had received the arrow from Tiera.

“W-What it is now…”

One of the bandits, whose comrade was suddenly sent flying, looked at the thicket in in a daze.

When in front of an enemy, that was a fatal opening.

“Idiot! Don’t turn your eyes away from this fellow!!”

It was already too late when the bandit’s leader yelled out.

“Swish!”

Gaien approached the bandit who showed the opening and swung his long katana down.

The bandit barely reacted to the voice of the leader and broke his posture, thereby he became unable to defend against the single blow from Gaien that was filled with power. The long katana raised a buzz as it clashed against the Magic Sword. The Magic Sword was repelled, and from the single blow of the long katana, it was blown away together with the body. By a miracle, the Magic Sword seemed to act as a substitute for armor, defending the bandit from the long katana. But unfortunately, although the Magic Sword gave off the impression of protecting the bandit’s life by reducing most the momentum from the long katana, it was disappointingly not enough and broke in the next moment. Naturally, the bandit’s body, which the Magic Sword protected, was still in one piece.

“Wh…What…”

Looking at his subordinate from the side, the squeaky voice of the leader came out. It was unthinkable to beat a Magic Sword and cut it in two, even for a rank A. His eyes were wide open as he looked at Gaien like he saw something unbelievable.

“Though you guys are Magic Sword holders, unfortunately, they are no match for my Magic Katana.”

The battle situation that they thought to be to in their favor was overturned in an instant.

The incident that happened in front of him was unbelievable for the bandits’ leader. The information he had received claimed that they all were rank E, with Gaien as the sole exception. They were supposed to only lost half of their men at worst. For the one who went up against Tsubaki, despite being a Magic Sword holder at C rank, he was a subordinate that was worthy enough of being her opponent.

The confused leader clung to the tiny bit of hope that a subordinate would save him, but he even turned toward his aide. And then, what came into his view next, was yet another impossible scene.

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Immediately after the battle started, two bandits went to face Shin. One of them had brown hair and the other man had blond hair. The one with brown hair was level 151, the blond hair was 153. If one were to say it in adventurer terms, they would be C rank. Looking at the deployment, Tsubaki had taken down her sole opponent quickly, Gaien was holding four people, and the two people here, probably going after Nack, were already expected by Shin. The man who lurked in the bushes was the lowest level among the bandits while the blond man had the highest level next to the leader. At that level, he might even be able to deal with the flying arrow. The air he gave off was clearly different.

“Well, what has been done can not be undone.”

He muttered, and blocked the route of the two people.

To force Shin out of the way, the guy with brown hair went ahead and unsheathed his sword. The aura attached to this Magic Sword was yellow. However, the katana Shin was holding was different in a big way. For the Magic Swords of the current world, the definition was different compared to the Magic Swords from the game era.

Though the place where the aura leaked out from on the blade was identical, the sword itself was originally classified as a 《Legend》 grade, not a Magic Sword. The swords that the bandits had were not Magic Swords in the true meaning of the word.

The bandit’s sword gave off an aura like steam, but the white aura which Shin’s katana emitted was converging in the form of a sword in order to fit around the katana’s blade. The air pressure of the aura, released from the Magic Sword showed the quality. An aura that did not scatter, and instead surrounded the sword's blade was said to be the top in ability.

Therefore, the natural outcome of the two people clashing their swords was displayed.

After the blades clashed with a little rivalry, it ended when a clear sound rang out and the sword of the bandit was broken. Both items could be called Magic Swords but one was a Magic Sword imitation. However, the katana that Shin held displayed its ability multiple times, and could exchange blows like the real deal. The sword that uselessly discharged its aura was so different from Shin's standard that he would call it a fake.

The brown hair looked at his sword that could even inflict a wound on a Horn Dragon but yet was broken in a single blow. And then, continuing with that gap, with the same stroke, Shin cut down the brown haired man.

"Waa!? broke——n !?"

The voice raised was filled with surprise because he was cut, and the bandit with brown hair collapsed.

Like a flash. There was no hesitation in that movement.

For Shin to kill a person, it didn't mean that he was used to it. But he was already beyond the stage of hesitation, worry, and other such things since a long time ago. During the death game, nobody wanted to get tangled up with a person who fought on the front line.

Besides, the opponent was a bandit who wielded a sword with evil intentions. When he saw the blood remains from a previous victim on the armor, it was impossible for his sword to be dull.

He never looked at life lightly. However, he shouldn't be too serious either.

"Now then, what are you going to do?"

Shin didn’t look at the brown haired man that collapsed, instead he stepped in front of the blond hair.

Shin had a light tone. Speaking as if he was asking for the description of a meal, giving the blond hair more pressure.

The blond hair, who was shocked, was making an ugly face. He looked at the place where the brown hair’s Magic Sword broke, perhaps, for the first time. Then his line of sight changed to compare Shin’s katana with his sword.

“Anyways, that sword is a nuisance.”

Shin casually stepped forward, and waved his katana. With that alone, the blond hair’s Magic Sword was smashed apart.

“Wha!? T-That’s ridiculous…My Magic Sword is…”

The blonde hair muttered dumbfoundedly after seeing his Magic Sword that had already become only a hilt. He was not able to see the single blow from Shin from a distance where he should have been able to. Shin didn’t use any skill. With only stats and ability, he closed the distance of several mels in an instant.

“Next, to immobilize.”

With those words, Shin’s figure vanished. Thereupon, an acute pain ran through the blond’s limbs.

The body, without the support of its hands and feet, collapsed onto the ground. At the rear, Shin put his katana back into the sheath. He had shattered the bones just by striking with the back of the sword.

“Did it end there too?”

“Yeah, Shin was tormenting him.”

“He just going easy on him!”

While they were exchanging jokes, the leader, who was the opponent of Gaien, looked at Shin. The blond hair was equally confused about the situation. No matter how much he thought about it, that was not the fighting power of an E rank.

“Now then, let’s have a talk about the person who handed over the information to you.”

The situation was explained to Nack, so there would be time for them to interrogate the leader. When Nack understood that he might have been deliberately targeted, he consented.

The interrogation was performed by Gaien and Nack, as they entered the thicket and Shin and Tsubaki returned to the wagon.

Tiera had a worried face toward the two people, especially as she approached Shin————

“Good job, for the time bei——muguu!?”

———— And she suddenly held Shin’s head, embraced to her chest.

Tsubaki stared in amazement at the sudden action, and Shin, whose speech was interrupted, was confused. Tiera’s jacket was open, exposing the chest, and Shin’s face was in held in there. Though there was the inner cloth, the fabric was not thick enough. Therefore, a fairly vivid sensation enveloped Shin’s face.

Though there was no space to completely enjoy the sensation, as the person in question, Tiera's action, was too abrupt.

"Um, what are you doing?"

"Don't move…just a little…bit…okay…"

It appeared that Tiera had some sort of purpose for the time being. Tsubaki, who was forcibly convincing herself to watch their progress attentively so as to understand. This situation was too incomprehensible to get involved with. Above all, Tiera's expression was awfully serious.

When he heard Tiera's oddly charming voice, Shin became docile too. That state was maintained for a while and when Shin was about to start being able to enjoy the soft sensation that surrounded his face, Tiera let Shin's head loose.

However, both of her hands firmly held onto Shin's head.

"Umm…Tiera? What…"

Tiera, who said nothing, stared into Shin's eyes with a serious face. Shin felt it was awfully long, although it was only a few seconds.

"…Yosh."

Finally, after nodding a little, Tiera released Shin's head, and went outside the wagon to be on lookout.

"What is it…now…"

"Who knows?"

Though he asked Tsubaki, she similarly didn’t understand it either. Shin had a question mark over his head as well.

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While taking distance from Shin and Tsubaki, Tiera searched for Shin’s presence. Even though it was only a fairly small range from Shin and others, it was still out of normal for G rank adventurers.

Relief spread through her chest as she secretly moved to behind the wagon. Until a few minutes ago, Shin, who returned with Tsubaki, still slightly wore that presence as usual on the surface. That dark, sharp, and unpleasant feeling that she wanted to run away from by reflex.

Although it was a momentary thing, when looking back at the action she took, it was an action which she really thought of seriously, but at the same time her face became almost as red as a beet.

In the beginning, when Tiera hadn’t come to Tsuki no Hokora yet, Tiera, who was totally frightened, was gently embraced by Schnee. Her anxiety was softened by that act alone.

Thus, she thought that the presence might disappear if she did the same thing. For Tiera, who had limited contact with others, she thought that it was the most effective way.

Anyways, the result was a success. If anything, she was a little panicky when she returned to her sanity, but because the goal had been reached, she considered it a good thing.

(Am I the only one who noticed? Or am I strange?)

She felt the familiar thirst for blood at the time when she was driven out of her village. She was still mentally young back in those days, but she only felt fear. On the other hand, when Shin confronted the bandits, she noticed the change in the nature for the thirst for blood. No, it might be good that she noticed.

Tiera personally didn’t understand her sense well, but it was because of the sense of impending crisis that it became stronger. The impulse that she couldn’t understand. Though it was not regarded as manipulation of the heart and mind, there was strangely no discomfort. She seemed to understand that there was no danger at all; there was a strange trust.

When she composed herself before long, in a sense, it was obvious what Tiera would think of next.

(After this, what kind of face should I make when I talk with Shin…?)

Where had the seriousness, when embracing Shin tightly, gone? The bewildered appearance of saying “Au Au”, when seen by a person who knew the usual Tiera, would think of it as really cute.

Though she intended to hide and move, Shin and Tsubaki having perfectly witnessed her appearance, was a fact not known by Tiera.

Chapter 2 Part 1

Shin and the others waited for ten minutes while guarding the wagon. Then Gaien and Nack returned. The bandit leader’s figure was not seen. He was likely taken care of since there was no need to bring him back alive.

Everyone climbed back into the carriage and tried to recover from the delay caused by the bandits, so the speed started to increase a little. Nack was responsible for being the driver, so Gaien explained the information obtained to Shin and the others.

“In other words, they wanted the baggage Nack-san carried?”

“That’s right. It seems to be related to a church matter. But they weren't informed of what the baggage was.”

“They didn’t know what to take?”

Tsubaki asked.

“Well. Consequently, after the guards were slaughtered, together with the coachman, they would steal the wagon.”

Shin, who listened to the story, instantly thought that Rashia might be related to this case. The priest appointment of Rashia was only valid when recognized officially by the church. Therefore, the mark of proof, necessary documents, and so on might have to be transported.

The client who requested it, without telling their goal to the bandits, was at the same time trying to avoid being detected. Though it was simply a guess, when he looked at the place, where no one had disclosed what Nack was transporting, it was no doubt that it was something important. There were plenty of those possibilities.

When Shin thought about it, for Nack to have a Grimm horse by chance, which traveled faster than a common merchant, and to also have guards, it seemed to be the right interpretation.

Afterwards, without encountering any more bandits or being attacked by monsters, the group arrived at Beirun.

The wagon pulled by the Grimm horse passed the gate.

A lot of wagons entered the gate in similar ways. It was congested, but it was reasonably crowded with people.

Beirun was a small country, and similar to the surrounding countries. Eltnia continent had a shape of two continents linked, and Beirun was located in the middle of the two. Because of its strategic location, they might be invaded by the big countries, so they cooperated by forming an alliance to prevent an invasion by another country. Since each of the countries had a chosen one, the total force of the alliance was said to exceed even a big country's.

“Thank you for your efforts, if there’s a another opportunity, I will request you again.”

They passed through the gate and advanced for a while along the road, and the wagon stopped in front of a second-hand shop.

Unlike a usual merchant, Nack said his gratitude with words, and handed over the proof of request completion to Gaien. This was how to receive the reward, once it was submitted to the guild.

“Well then, I will go to Kilmont after this, what will everyone else do?”

Gaien started on a topic after this matter along the road. Kilmont was ruled by the dragon king, a Dragnil's country.

The formal name was the dragon empire, Kilmont.

From Schnee's story, it was Shin's support character no. 4, High Dragnil Shibaid's country.

"I also have business in Kilmont."

"Tiera and I have business in Falnido."

Gaien and Tsubaki seemed to have a different destinations from Shin and Tiera.

"Fumu, this is divided splendidly again."

"I knew it's like a combination."

Meeting and parting were part of the adventurer ways. Gaien and Tsubaki seemed to go to Kilmont for another guard request this time. By the way, before they met Shin and Tiera, they already received the same request several times.

After receiving the reward, they each left the messages, "Let's meet again" and "Call out to me if you see me", and started their journey to Kilmont. Though it was very simple, because it was often the case for adventurers to meet again during different requests, they might have to be practical if that was the case.

"So, how do we advance after this? Use a wagon too?"

“If I’m not mistaken, using an ordinary horse will take one and a half months, and a wagon will take 2 months, which we should not do.”

“It’s too far now that I think about it again.”

After separating from Gaien and Tsubaki, Shin and Tiera talked about the means of transportation. There was the way of moving on foot, but they were not so poor that they couldn’t ride on a wagon together. Though Shin was the fastest if he ran, he couldn’t hold Tiera all the time. After thinking it through, Shin decided to purchase a wagon. Either way, Shin and Tiera could continue traveling even after Schnee joined them. There was no loss in owning one. That’s why Shin and Tiera visited the shop that sold wagons for trips, as introduced by the guild.

“How should I say, all of the performances seem similar, even the high performance ones.”

“No no, customer, there is a reason for this.”

Towards Shin, who had muttered while looking at the shop, the storekeeper, who was coming nearby, answered.

“Is that so?”

“Yes, a large quantity of wagons were bought by the country a while ago. The ones here were made with the leftover materials, because we had to prepare the number required, it pretty much became the same thing in the long run. Depending on the material, it will become a little better.”

“I see, materials huh?”

From Shin’s assessment, the quality wasn’t that good, but it couldn’t be helped. Shin recalled the wagon used by Nack. Though the appearance was not good because it stressed the importance of transporting cargo, as for the material, the good ones were certainly used. Something needs to be done about the shaking, so they didn't have to suffer there. Of course, that didn't mean that he was dissatisfied with everything else.

"This one…only need to restructure it just a bit."

"Wait a minute, did I hear something bad just now?

Tiera put her hand on Shin's shoulder who was muttering. And as she now knows from experience, she would expect that didn't mean a good thing. Though she had a laughing face, her eyes weren't laughing.

"What do you mean?"

"It's shameless. I know you're lying. Now spit it out. What are you going to do this time?"

"Why are you being so cautious? I just want to improve the wheel's movement, and suppress the shaking a little."

The shaking countermeasures could reduce the burden on the horse pulling the wagon. Naturally, he didn't want the trick to be found out, so the outward appearance wouldn't change much. One must get in the wagon to actually feel the change.

"Really? It won't fly in the sky and travel without a horse?"

"Of course not!!"

Shin didn't say, "It was not possible to do." But because the wagon's design was out of his specialty, it wouldn't be easy.

However, because the springs and wheel bearings were within the blacksmith’s domain, it would be easy to start working on it.

“Well, it’s fine if you only go that far.”

“It’s better to keep a low profile. Aren’t I learning, even a little?”

“If it wasn’t you who said it, I’d believe it.”

“That’s kind of cruel.”

Not being able to object was painful.

“Then, the wagon can be remodeled further?”

“Only a little because it’s not my main job, but it’s better than nothing.”

“If it’s better than Nack-san’s, it’ll be welcomed.”

Apparently, Tiera was also annoyed by the shaking of the wagon. The carriages that nobles rode in hardly shook, that was something that Tiera learned from an idle chat with an adventurer who came into the store. So, she thought that she should rather welcome him if he could make such a carriage.

Though the shaking was minimized in Nack’s wagon too, it was hard on Tiera who was not accustomed to it.

“Enough about remodeling, which carriage will do? Honestly, I don’t know which one is good.”

“First of all, I want space big enough to be able to sleep inside. Something like that.”

Shin thought about the number of people and the baggage they would have, and pointed at the biggest carriage in the shop.

“That’s right. Master will come too, so we also need to think about if it will hold a large amount of baggage.”

Tiera also agreed, about it not posing any problems with the number of people.

Also the horse must be powerful in order to be able to pull the wagon’s weight, in the worst case, he would have to get Yuzuha’s help to pull the wagon. That transformation ability was indeed useful.

“Thank you for your patronage! By the way, customer, have you obtained a horse for pulling the wagon?”

“No, I’ll go buy one after this.”

“Is this your first time buying a horse?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“If that’s the case, this is a piece of advice for the customer who just did an expensive purchase. The horse’s legs should be as strong as possible. Though it’s different when using several of them; to pull it with only one, the wagon is a little heavy.”

“Thank you, I will use it as a reference.”

Perhaps, a draft horse type would be good. Given the number of people that will ride on the wagon, Shin thought that type was better.

“On that subject, how about using a monster to pull it? Because there is person I know who does it in such a way.”

“Well, the horsepower is definitely in a whole different league. Though it would have to be tamed, haven’t you heard that it’s difficult?”

“Indeed. Thank you for the information.”

He thanked the storekeeper who gave them advice and left the shop. Their following destination; a shop that dealt with horses.

“Next is…hmm? This sound is”

When Shin took a step forward to go purchase a horse, a ‘Ding’ sound reach his ears. It was the ringtone when notified of a voice chat, which he had set before. Because the operation hadn’t changed since the game era, he accepted the call by thinking about it.

“(Hello, This is Shin. Loud and clear.)”

“(This is Schnee. The request here is over. Where are you now?)”

“(We are in Beirun. I intend to go to Falnido by carriage once a horse is obtained.)”

Because it was just the right time, he conveyed his present location and the wagon he just bought.

“(Is that so. Then, I will capture a monster. I think I will arrive in Beirun in about 1 day, would you wait for me there?)”

“(I understand. Now that you mention it, you are also a Tamer.)”

At the time when Shin was encouraged to obtain the job from Rokuten’s Tamer and Summoner, Cashmere, he was also accompanied by Schnee. She acquired it when he did. Though she hadn’t tamed anything up till now, it was useful in an unexpected place.

“(Yes, please look forward to it, because I will bring the strongest one possible.)”

An image of Schnee stating so in high spirits came into his mind.

“(And, may I ask you one thing?)”

Schnee asked.

“(What is it?)”

“(When storing the Tsuki no Hokora, did anything happen? Because Tsuki no Hokora disappeared, I’m worried they would do something.)”

“(Ah, somehow it was monitored, but because being followed is troublesome, I used a little magic skill.)”

“(I see, it’s an illusion, huh? That’s quite peaceful. I thought the surrounding land would be cleared, because it is you.)”

“(Hold on, what do you think I am!?)”

“(Haven’t you done it before?)”

Apparently, she seemed to be talking about the death game era.

“(No, that’s because I’m not the kind of guy who just goes all out in order to wipe such opponents, and to begin with, I wouldn’t do such a violent thing to the monitoring people of a country.)”

Certainly, he would not go easy on an opponent who had come to take his life, but he didn’t have the intention to needlessly kill an opponent who only observed. In the first place, it was Tsuki no Hokora and Schnee that were monitored, not Shin.

“(If Shin decides so, then it’s fine. The upper echelon might be serious about it this time, because I acted like I didn’t know about it.)”

“(Right. Of course, our appearance was not seen, since I used a concealment skill. To the guys who were watching, Tsuki no Hokora would have seemed to have suddenly disappeared. I’m sure it caused a great deal of confusion.)”

The multiplex use of concealment and illusion. It was a popular way of showing an illusion to others while hiding oneself. Because the user was Shin, the other person couldn’t help but to become a target of the spells. As for the ‘concealment’, the skill name was similar for both martial arts and magic skills. It was the magic skill ‘concealment’ that Shin used this time. The effect was lower than the martial arts skills, but it was effective for himself, and he could hide Tiera too. In fact, the spies couldn’t see them at all.

“(Get a taste of their own medicine. To be honest, while I get praised unanimously, I got mad at the way they monitored and solicited repeatedly behind my back. Even if it causes a bit of an uproar, it will be their own fault.)”

Schnee said that irritably. Of course, not all countries were like that. There were many countries that contacted her with a moderate attitude. However, there were also a lot of countries that gathered war potential over the hegemony after the chaos due to the crustal movement. It was known that Schnee was the subordinate of a High Human, and an endless amount of countries desperately tried to include her in their own area.

This was how things got this way, that Tsuki no Hokora continued to be monitored even after the turmoil had settled down. Even though there were few people or countries that monitored her knowing those days, it was not so very long ago for the high elf Schnee. Even now that she became calmer compared to those days, she still felt a strong discomfort from the monitoring and solicitation.

“(Somehow, it’s even worse than I heard.)”

“(There are even countries that claimed to have the property rights for Tsuki no Hokora without permission, too. I thought of erasing each of those countries at the time.)”

“(When you say it like that, it must be serious.)”

While telling him that she was disgusted, Shin understood why Schnee got angry. Their precious place and things, it was natural to be angry when others claimed it was their own without permission.

With Schnee’s temperament, her anger was probably greater than that.

“(Well, there’s no need to be worry about it anymore now. That was my property originally, it’s up to me to take it anywhere.)”

He couldn’t concede Tsuki no Hokora, even if it was important to the people.

For Shin, Tsuki no Hokora was a precious place where he spent a long time with friends. Even if the opponent might be the king, he didn’t have any intentions to submit even a fragment.

“(Perhaps if Tsuki no Hokora was obtained, they thought that Schnee would follow?)”

“(Right, such people exist, too. There were even a lot of people who proposed marriage though.)”

“(…Right)”

It was Shin who set her appearance, but the beauty of Schnee could be said to be on the level of a beautiful courtesan. It was easy to imagine that she would be popular before long. Since Schnee and Tsuki no Hokora were known as a set, there might be a lot of people who tried to obtain Tsuki no Hokora, just to get that pretty face unexpectedly.

“(Well, it’s only natural, huh?)”

“(Are you jealous?)”

“(That…)”

He would’ve been proud of it in the game era, but the feeling changed now that it was reality. Shin also felt considerable feelings from Schnee. Was it because he was the master? Or as a man? It was difficult for him to make a judgment, but if possible, he thought it would be nice if it was the latter.

“(Fufu, is that so? Would you be jealous for me?)”

“(Why are you in a good mood like this?)”

“(Please guess~)”

“(I feel like I’m being led around by the nose.)”

The problem before guessing the reason for a good mood and so on; For a light novel’s main character who was thickheaded, there were possibilities of saying “I seriously didn’t know”.

Though Shin was also dense, still, it usually didn’t go to that extent.

“(Then contact me when the inn is decided upon. Because I don’t know when I will arrive yet. I will go directly to the inn according to the time.)”

“(Understood. See you later.)”

The Mind Chat was cut off. Since the goal of obtaining a horse were more or less met, he didn’t have to purchase a horse anymore.

“Hey Tiera, once the wagon is obtained, why don’t we look for an inn for tonight? I think securing the beds is important too.”

“What’s with this abruptness? Don’t we have to go buy a horse?”

“Schnee just contacted me. We will wait because she’ll catch a monster to replace the horse.”

“As expected from master. It’s perfect timing.”

Even though the admiration felt different, because he felt like he lost when he thought about it, Shin didn’t say anything. That timing was too perfect in his opinion.

“For the time being, would you like to go sightseeing while looking for an inn?”

“Okay, but it’s boring if we only walk around.”

Because they had time on hand, the two people decided to walk slowly. When they looked around at the stalls, various glassworks attracted their attention.

By the way, although Shin was also attracting attention because of the young fox on top of his head, he didn’t mind it since he had already gotten used to it in Bayreuth.

“Is the specialty here glass?”

“It’s beautiful. But I don’t know what it represents.”

The glassworks seemed to be popular, except the shops that sold glass, the products were displayed in almost every shop entrance.

They went to several shops in succession before finally stopping by a female store-keeper who was talkative, so they were introduced to a famous inn in this town. Since it was a lot of effort, they decided to stay at the inn there tonight.

They walked for about 15 minutes after they were instructed about the route, and saw a quite elegant building.

Judging from its appearance, it seemed to be made from wood, the outer walls were painted in white and its presence was clearly different from the neighboring inns. The windows in all of the rooms were fitted with glass. If seen properly, those window-glasses were enchanted to be completely strengthened.

Because the entrance door was big and had glass attached on the left and right, they could have a look inside. Rather than a common inn from fantasy, it had the same appearance as one would see in a modern hotel. The name of the inn was ‘The Reflected Flowers Palace’.

“Amazing! I didn’t see any inns that used glass in this way in Bayreuth.”

“It’s seems to be one of the selling points of this inn. It was said that its glass windows were firmly strengthened.”

“Indeed. I think it would be okay even if I hit them with a hammer.”

"But it seems a bit expensive."

While Shin looked at the details of the exterior with his architectural skill, Tiera worried about the price.

Since they couldn't stand in front of the inn forever, Shin went ahead and entered. Still, there was no automatic door or something like that, so they had to open it by themselves.

Once he was inside, the employees, who were dressed in stylish uniforms, immediately greeted them. When he conveyed that they had a female store-keeper refer them, they received a slight discount to some extent.

Apparently the main building was separate, this seemed to be the annexes for the trial services. Trial service? The two people look puzzled.

"For one night, it 4 silver coins per person."

Though the discount should have reduced the price, it was two silver coins more expensive than the Bear Point Pavilion of Bayreuth where he stayed before. It was as expected from a high-quality hotel.

Because there was the reward from Nack, they paid respectively for a night. He also thought about whether it would be okay for Yuzuha to accompany them, but it didn't seem to have any problems if they had a contract. Naturally, Shin would have take responsibility if it caused a disturbance or something like that.

"Um oba-chan(aunty), did you see through us and know if we could pay the price?"

"You're an adventurer. Aren't you all considered to have money?"

"Well we do have some, but the request's reward just diminished in one go."

Because half of their reward vanished in an instant, Shin unconsciously thought of such things. As a matter of fact, though there was some additional income, as a reward from defeating the bandits, he still felt it was too expensive. Actually, he did have a certain amount of white gold coins, but his money sense was still fuzzy.

"Since this is similar to the famous inn in Beirun, there are stories saying that you should stay at least once. Also, the main building costs one gold coin per night, that's still fair."

"Who could stay there?"

"Perhaps, it's people like Shin. Don't you have money from the raw materials you sold to me last time? To be frank, the current Shin is quite rich, you know?"

"T-That's right. I only thought about the request's reward."

Tiera pointed it out, and Shin finally remembered that he himself was quite rich. Judging from the total sum of money he had in hand, 4 silver coins was just a trivial expense.

Even though the inn was where the reward from the guard duty would disappear within 3 days, because the tempered glass was very expensive, 4 silver coins might be a cheap price when he thought about the details of the facilities.

For this sort of famous inn, he understood why it became the topic of the story. It was a special trip, so Shin decided not to worry about it and enjoy himself a little.

“As expected from a high-quality inn. This is already an ordinary hotel. The soundproofing is secure, too.”

That was the level of quality that Shin first felt when he entered the assigned guest room. It was a place that could be called a budget hotel if seen in his former(real) world. Though it would be excessive for comparison, the only other inn that Shin knew of in this world, Bear Point Pavilion, from the bed, desk and the chair provided, they were of a higher grade. Still, it was inferior to the furniture inside Tsuki no Hokora.

“Kuu, can I talk already?”

“Yes, it’s all right here.”

Yuzuha seemed to endure it for a long time in the town. The walls of the inn were thick, so it was judged to be safe to talk as it spoke to Shin.

“There’s still time until dinner, shall I do some equipment maintenance?”

Shin put the luggage on the floor and took off his sword from his waist and began the inspection.

It was hardly necessary in the game, but he thought that he should try to keep doing it wherever it was practicable here. A small chip in the blade and rust due to blood remains and so on were factors that hastened the deterioration of the arms. Naturally, frequent inspections were required, especially for low-grade arms.

“Pretty!”

“It took a lot of hardships to reach this level.”

The aura that wrapped the blade was visible, and Yuzuha voiced its impression. Actually, the blade, which retained its mysterious shine, was indeed beautiful. He could understand if it was called a work of art and not arms. While looking at the radiance that could not be emitted by superficial gear, Shin remembered the days of his former training.

He confirmed the blade state, loosening the hilt and the guard of the katana in order. As he was about to return the katana into the scabbard, the door was knocked upon.

Tiera’s voice was heard from the room.

“Shin, do you have a moment?”

“Yeah, I’ll open the door now.”

Before Shin stood up, Yuzuha took a human form and opened the door. Of course, it wore the shrine maiden’s clothes.

“Ara, Yuzuha-chan. You are in that form now, huh?”

“Kuu, do you have business with Shin?”

“I want to ask about a little something.”

Yuzuha showed her in, and Tiera entered the room.

“And, what do you want to ask me?”

“Didn’t I receive 【Analyze】from Shin before? It’s about that.”

“Was there something wrong?”

“It may be trivial, but when I looked at Tsubaki’s stats, there was a thing that worried me a little.”

“Something that worried you?”

Suddenly, a certain conjecture flashed into Shin’s mind.

“By any chance, when you used【Analyze】, sometimes it became hard to see the race of Tsubaki…right?”

“Eh? Shin too?”

Tiera was surprised. Shin’s prediction appeared to be correct somehow or another. To say it accurately, rather than hard to see, there was some static or something such that moved around. Though it was only the race column, it was a phenomenon that had never existed in the game. It was the first time for Tiera to have seen one. For Shin, it was his second time.

“I am a bit interested too. But I don’t understand this well either.”

In case of Shin, he wondered whether it was a malfunction appearing or not, since the way he came into this world was also a malfunction. Anyway, he only knew that the static noise didn’t start until he encountered Tsubaki.

“I wonder if master knows something?”

“Right. Either way, she’ll join us tomorrow, and we’ll ask her then.”

Since Schnee could use the same 【Analyze】as Shin, she might know something. However, it was not an urgent business, so he decided to not use the Mind Chat.

“Kuu, a serious problem?”

"It's probably not a serious matter. I have a guess, but there is no conclusive evidence."

Shin shrugged his shoulders while smiling wryly toward Yuzuha.

"Which reminds me, when will master come?"

Tiera asked.

"I don't know the exact time. She told me that if I tell her the inn, she will come there."

"If that's the case, you can already take a rest for today. I guess master won't come at night."

"Well, I guess so. Let's have dinner soon."

The current time was past 6.00 P.M. Though it was a little early to have a meal, it seemed to be unquestionable in the inn. Because Yuzuha wanted to eat together, but its human appearance couldn't be shown so they brought their dinner inside the room to eat.

Though it could be said that the food was grand, the bread was still brown. Apparently, the white bread seemed to be quite high class for some reason or another. By the way, if this was the main building, white bread would appear commonly.

Afterwards, he asked for a hot bath and fell asleep after changing his clothes. About the hot spring, in Bear Point Pavilion it was charged per use, but was free here. There didn't seem to be a bathhouse. Since the one in Bear Point Pavilion was basic bathing, he felt like there wasn't much of a difference.

Chapter 2 Part 2

Dawn of the next day.

The half-asleep Yuzuha had crawled into Shin’s futon, but it was really peaceful and not making any fuss, because it was in young fox mode. Shin unconsciously rubbed Yuzuha’s head and moved it away, and then washed his face. Just like a hotel, the room had a washbasin. After feeling refreshed, Tiera visited them, and they ate a breakfast similar to yesterday’s.

“Just now, before breakfast, I heard that Schnee will arrive in Beirun by the end of the morning. I’ll remodel the wagon, what will Tiera do?”

Shin talked to Tiera while chewing his bread. Because he thought it was not a good idea to keep waiting without doing anything, he intended to remodel the wagon.

“I’ll look at how you remodel the wagon.”

“Yuzuha too!”

Tiera, who had demanded that Shin restrain himself, seemed to be interested in the remodeling process, too. It goes without saying for Yuzuha.

Apparently, they appeared to be excited about seeing an unknown technique.

After checking out from the inn, they headed straight to the shop from which the wagon was bought. The wagon was still in the shop as there was no horse to draw it yet.

“Welcome. Oh, it’s the customer from yesterday. Have you bought a horse?”

“It was decided that my acquaintance would supply it. So I intended to fiddle with the wagon a little.”

“Heh, is Customer-san a craftsman or something? I thought you were an adventurer.”

The surprised shopkeeper returned, and they moved to the place where the carriage was. First of all, he laid a magic skill that lifted the target temporarily to prevent the frame from falling down, and then installed the spring as a countermeasure for the shaking. Of course, it was not just attached, he tinkered around with the wheels’ axis, too. The appearance of lumps of wood and metal, wriggling and changing shape, might be quite weird, depending on the point of view. However, the speed of the operation in that state was fast. Since he went underneath the frame; he worked quickly, because he didn’t want the shopkeeper to see it. The shopkeeper didn’t notice that the wagon’s performance had already become incomparable to that of the surrounding wagons.

And seeing the work scene up close, Yuzuha had glittering eyes, and Tiera’s eyes were in a focused state. Tiera was somehow able to understand the details of the operation, too. But seeing lumps of metal become flexible and changing shape in Shin’s hand caused them to be speechless. She wanted to say: “Haven’t you learned about not attracting attention already?”, but managed to endure, as the shopkeeper might hear her.

“Phew, I only need to attach the bearings next.”

“(Kuu! Shin, what was that a while ago? The iron was flexible!)”

Was it that interesting? Yuzuha began to talk through the Tamer version of Mind Chat. Did it love craftsmanship? The enthusiasm was seen before, during the time when Shin was tempering the longsword.

“(This is the production group skill which processes iron. Somehow, I found a use for it.)”

It was the production group skill, 【Molding】, to be exact. Originally, it was only possible to transform objects into fixed patterns, but once he knew how to use it, the shape could be changed into interesting ways. Because the technique of remodeling a wagon had not changed since the game era, he could finish it without any problem.

“Shin, where did your self-restraint go?”

“A-Ah? I hid myself in a way that I couldn’t be seen, and the external appearance didn’t change either. Why are you so mad?”

“Certainly I saw it in a flash, and I don’t even know what the difference is.”

“Right? Then————”

“But! It’s obviously unnatural.”

“Um, why is that?”

Before he knew it, Shin was spinning his mind around to think if he was guilty of doing something wrong, as Tiera was in preaching mode. Unfortunately, the reason why Tiera was angry didn’t come to mind.

“It’s the time.”

“Time?”

“Yes, time. You know, no matter how easy the work was that modified the wagon, it shouldn’t take less than 1 hour! It’s too fast!!”

“Ah, I see.”

“Don’t ‘Ah’ me, you have to take it a little more serious…”

She said it with a strong tone, but in low voice. While Shin was using the impressive lost technology, Tiera warned him. Though Tiera said one hour, only about 15 minutes had actually passed since he started his work. Come to think of it, it was definitely too fast, so it might become a story of, “How on earth did you do that?”. Because he only cared about the appearance and the result, he seemed to have forgotten about the working speed. Shin didn’t realize it, since there was never a complaint about being too quick in the game.

“It couldn’t be helped, so I’ll go slow with the bearings.”

“Please, do so.”

He accepted Tiera’s demand and proceeded to work slowly this time. Since he only had to remodel the axial junction and the wheels to some extent, it didn’t take that much time even when he did it slowly. He could concentrate on the work, because only a small part of the body was still floating.

Afterwards, the bearings were attached to all four wheels, and the modifications were completed. The total time for the job took about one and a half hours, including the installation of the springs. The current time was half past 10 now.

He told the shopkeeper at the wagon dealer that they would bring a horse, and exited the shop. And then, they waited for contact from Schnee. Since they had time, they went for another walk in a different direction from yesterday. They spent about one hour of window-shopping at the street stalls, and then the call from Schnee came.

“It’s the call from Schnee. She seems to be in the forest ahead of the north gate.”

Because he conveyed that they had already checked out from the inn and were wandering around, it was decided that she would wait outside. And so, they headed toward the north gate immediately. While extending his perception area, they passed through the gate and walked further. The response from Schnee showed what she had already captured a suitable beast. But——

“…………”

Both of his feet that were supposed to be walking in high spirits became heavy.

“Kuu, what is it?”

“What’s the matter?”

“Sigh, how should I say this…, I think you will understand when we arrive there.”

Tiera raised her question after Yuzuha’s words, but Shin said that she would find out once they reached there. The reason was that even if he didn’t expressly speak of it, as Shin walked forward, he had an expression of bewilderment, because he understood what had caused Yuzuha to be cautious.

What was displayed on the map, moved into Shin’s field of vision. The monster that stood next to Schnee was why there was such a reaction from Shin.

When they got closer to the forest, the appearance gradually came into view.

“Shin, that one, is strong.”

“Hey Shin, really, what is that? My 【Analyze】 doesn’t show its name, let alone its level.”

Yuzuha and Tiera seemed to be uneasy.

“Well, that’s natural.”

Even if it was Schnee, it couldn’t be helped as the monster alone emitted huge pressure. Tiera stood behind Shin to hide herself, Yuzuha re-hardened its posture that had weakened.

“I’m here now. As I told you with Mind Chat, the monster I brought will pull the wagon. In the case of this fellow, it won’t have any problems pulling the wagon that Shin gets on.”

With a very nice smile, Schnee said so full of confidence. That smile with overflowing charm would make everyone a captive.

However, Shin’s heart was about to say “Seriously?! This will pull the wagon?”, as his line of sight went to what was behind Schnee.

“Just to check, but where did you get it?”

“Because I was near the sacred mountain, it’s from there.”

“…Clever. As expected from Schnee.”

“I’m honored to receive your praise.”

As expected from Schnee, she seemed to interpret the meaning of crazy in a good way, even with Shin's state of mind.

"I forgot. Master sometimes gets reckless when it comes to Shin."

"That information, if possible, I wish you would have said that earlier."

Tiera looked up at the sky with a shocked expression, while Shin held his brow with one hand as if to say, "Oh great!…". Watching the two people, Schnee looked puzzled.

"Well, nothing can be done since you already brought it here. For the time being, may I ask about this fellow?"

"Yes. Because it will pull the wagon that Shin is riding on, I thought it should be something like this, a divine beast class monster."

"No no, that way of thinking is weird. It's strange no matter how I think about it! What kind of wagon do you think it'll pull!?"

Shin exclaimed, while pointing at the monster which was obedient behind Schnee.

That shout was reasonable too. Anyhow, its physique was much bigger than a carriage. In the case of it pulling, the wagon would need to be the size of a single house.

"Of course, I assumed that Shin would say that."

"What?"

Schnee calmly replied to Shin's retort. Apparently, she seemed to have a plan.

Shin looked at the monster Schnee brought again.

A four-legged walking type monster, its name was Gruefago.

It had a forward-leaning posture when it walked, and its height was about 3 mels from the ground. Even if it was pulling to the wagon he purchased, they might not able to see the front.

Ash-silver hair covered its whole body to the forearm, which was developed like a horse's body. Moreover, it had thick and strong muscle masses on its tail, and it rivaled the power of the Lord Skull Face which Shin and Schnee fought before.

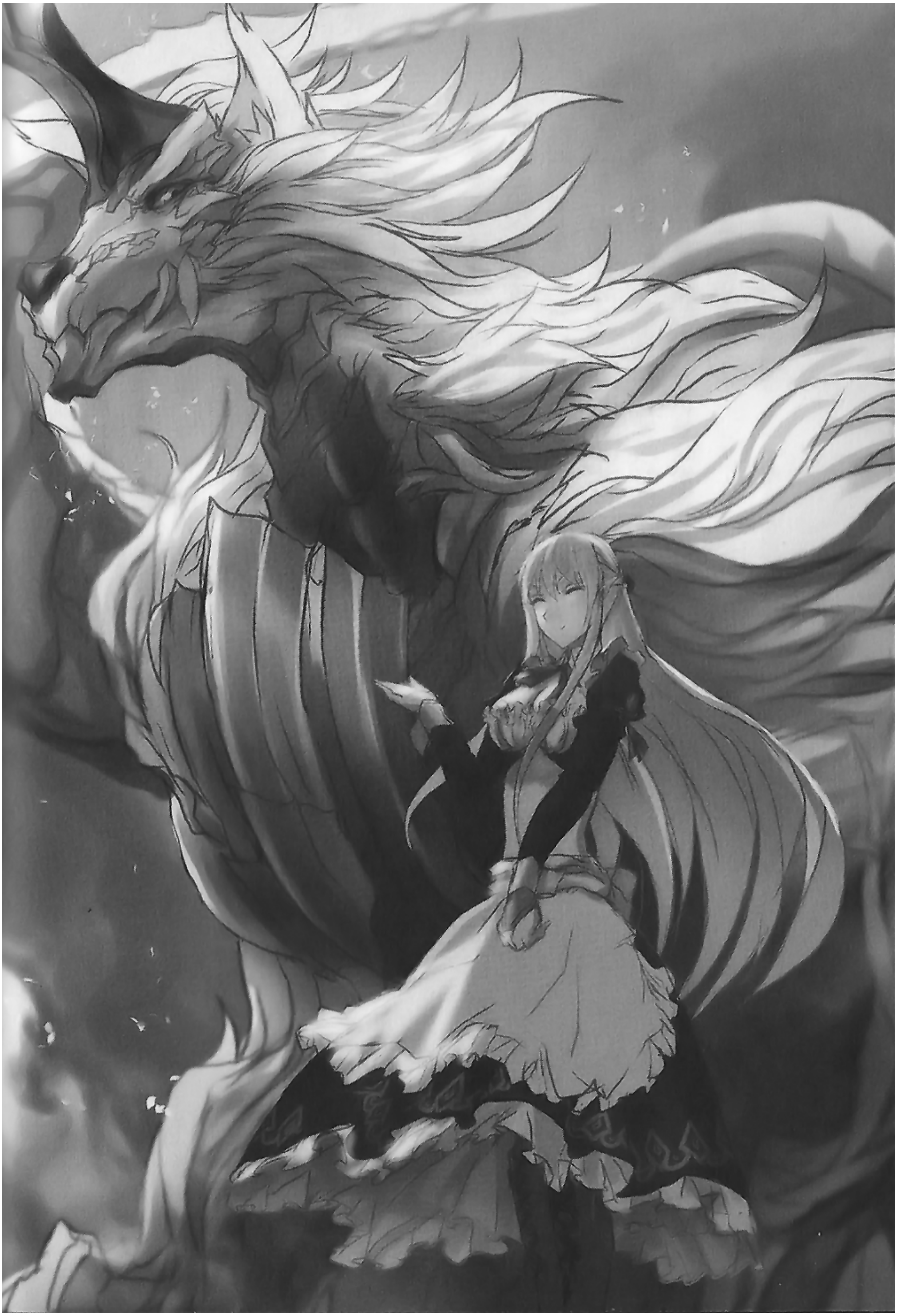
In addition, if it began a surprise attack during the game era, it would be a fiendish monster even for advanced level players. Its head resembled that of a wolf, but there were scales that dully shined visible here and there, making it possible to tell that it was a different animal.

Above all, it was eye-catching as Gruefagos' have a horn protruding from their foreheads. Though its horn was crooked to some extent, an amount of light and shade was emitted from the emerald horn, just like a crystal.

There was one fact to understand from there. This meant that this Gruefago was a unique monster.

Even though it was unclear, it should be a monster that attacked without hesitation when it found a player, and yet it behaved itself without showing such signs at all.

When he checked with 【Analyze】, it appeared as Gruefago Jade, Lv. 751. Originally, the upper limit level of a Gruefago should be 650, but it was a common occurrence for a unique monster to exceed the limit. It would certainly be a recipe for disaster if it descended on a human dwelling.



“Go on, do it.”

When Schnee said that, green phosphorescence enveloped the body of the Gruefago. Crackling sounds were occasionally heard, a small sense of incongruity was added to that magical scene.

The phosphorescence dimmed in less than a minute, and a single monster made an appearance.

Though 【Analyze】 confirmed it as the Gruefago, the appearance was different from before. The forelegs were about the same length as the rear legs and the tail also shrunk. Though it was somewhat irregular, it could be said that it was a slightly big wolf. The featured horn shrunk as well, so that only a small part of it could be seen from the forehead.

“It became small?”

“Yes. Since there’s this ability, there’s no problem if it pulls the wagon.”

“That’s certainly true.”

Surely, the wagon could be pulled without any problems. But, there was a thing Shin was interested in before that.

“Did it have such an ability?”

Gruefago were originally monsters that put emphasis on flinging themselves onto the enemy. Like Yuzuha, it should not specialize in transformations.

“Because it has a habit of ambushing and a preference for surprise attacks, it became a unique monster, and I think it obtained a more useful ability. In fact, it can use illusion and lightning attribute skills.”

Though he didn’t feel at ease because of that, a monster that couldn’t adapt didn’t make sense. Because it was born from demon essence, he was convinced that it would transform into a skeletal monster.

“I guess this appearance is probably fine for the time being. The wagon has already been modified, let’s return and depart from there.”

“Okay. Let’s do it.”

Since it was a waste of time even if he talked here, he decided to return and leave at once.

“Haa, it is strangely tiring.”

In contrast to the happy Schnee, Tiera appeared to be slightly tired. It was natural too, no matter how light the exchange of Shin and Schnee appeared to have been, that was certainly a monster that was called a divine beast standing before her eyes. Even if it seemed docile, the intimidating air dispersed around it was not normal. Now that it became small, the feeling of intimidation was on the same level as that of a common monster. It wouldn’t be strange if a commoner fainted because of the strong pressure from its original figure though. For Shin and Schnee to talk like it was nothing, the two people were strange.

If Tiera hadn't received training from Schnee, she would have joined the fainting group.

“Kuu, Kukuu?”

“Guru, guruaa!”

Looking at both of them barking to talk, all one could do was to have a strained smile.

"I agree with Tiera. I didn't expect that you would bring something of this level, either."

For Shin, if anything, his surprise was stronger than fatigue. Because when he said horse, he expected something like the higher kind of Grimm Horse, a Wonder Horse, or even higher than that, a Tri-Horse. For a monster that was said to be the standard for every merchant player, the level didn't exceed 200, because it was easy to handle. It was unexpectedly popular because of its horsepower.

However, a divine beast was obviously overqualified if he looked at the outcome.

"Was it something strange?"

"Master, usually one doesn't bring a divine beast simply to pull a wagon."

"I will only settle for this."

""Eh…""

What was her intention to bring it along? It couldn't be helped for Shin's and Tiera's voices to be in harmony.

"Don't you think it's a bit excessive?"

"No way, you don't like it…?"

Schnee's face became gloomy.

"Wait, wait, why are you depressed?"

"Well, Shin has a contract with an Element Tail, so if it's not a stronger monster maybe you wouldn’t be pleased with it?”

“Kuu? Guu-chan, don’t want?”

“Guruu!?”

Though what Shin meant was: ‘You don’t have to strain yourself’; Schnee seemed to have interpreted it as ‘You are not satisfied with this level?’. She was overly enthusiastic, too.

And, hearing the two people’s conversation, toward Yuzuha’s remark, the Gruefago expressed its surprise. Judging from its facial expression, it probably said, “Really?!”. As expected from a divine beast, it didn’t need to say out loud what it was thinking.

“No, a Gruefago is strong enough. Besides, it is a unique monster and I see almost no other flaws.”

“I am relieved when you say that. I thought it would be useful if the monster was as smart as a person.”

“So that means, it understood the things we talked about just now?”

“Yes. Though it can’t talk with words, most of our words are understood.”

“Guruu!”

“Leave it to me, it said.”

Yuzuha promptly followed up. It seemed that fellow monsters understanding each other was possible. After all, a divine beast class had high intelligence.

“This is my master. Be sure not to be rude.”

Schnee said while presenting Shin.

“Guru!!”

“Nice to meet you.”

Shin said as he patted the head of the Gruefago. Without a sign that it disliked it in particular, the Gruefajio closed its eyes partly, indicating that it felt good.

“By the way, what is this fellow’s name?”

“It’s Kagerou.”

“Is it because it can use illusions?” (T/N: The ‘影’ kanji, from ‘幻影’(genei) which means illusion, is pronounced as ‘kage’.)

“Yes. Is it too simple?”

“Well, that might be good. I think it’s a cool name.”

It was certainly simple, but Shin thought it was not bad. It was a name that is occasionally seen in games and manga.

“Guruu”

“I like it.”

This beast seemed to like it, too. Yuzuha, who moved to Kagerou’s back from Shin head, interpreted it properly. Since it might be hard to understand with only barking and gestures, it was very helpful.

“Then, Kagerou. I will give your first mission!”

“Guruu!!”

“That is, pull the wagon!”

“Guruaa!!”

To Shin, who exaggeratedly informed the beast, Kagerou answered full of motivation. Though Shin worried that it might complain, it didn’t seem to mind pulling the wagon.

With Schnee and Kagerou added to Shin’s party, they returned to Beirun from the forest, and came back to the shop where they left the wagon. At the time when they passed through the gate, Kagerou was registered as a monster partner of Schnee, similar to what Shin did in Bayreuth. For Kagerou, because its build was quite large unlike Yuzuha and its appearance seemed to be a little ferocious as well, it was necessary to hang a plate that indicated “Tame” on the monster’s neck.

Schnee was strongly warned that if Kagerou barked, acted violently and so on, there would be penalties for that, but that was inevitable. Unlike the monsters of the horse group, it was considered very likely that it would act violently.

Did bringing Kagerou along have some effect? Although Schnee and Tiera were beautiful women, no suspicious men tried to pick a quarrel with them. People like punks generally had a low sense of danger and lacked the ability to read the mood. But when they saw Kagerou, there were no daredevils who tried to pick quarrels with the group.

With Yuzuha riding on Shin’s head, they might have thought that Shin was Kagerou’s tamer, too. It was natural for a strong man to be with 2 beautiful elf women; it was from the air he gave off, everyone who looked at Shin’s party thought.

“Customer… this is also another great one you brought.”

The storekeeper was surprised when looking at Kagerou that appeared alongside Shin.

“There’s a little connection with someone I trust.”

“You don’t say, is it that beautiful woman whom I didn’t see yesterday?”

“Yeah, sort of.”

“I envy you brother, with how your young ladies look.”

What did the storekeeper imagine when looking at Tiera and Schnee; Shin’s shoulders were clapped down on hard. Though the storekeeper was acting a little overly familiar, there was almost no feeling of discomfort, which was expected from a merchant.

“It’s not such a relationship…”

Before he knew it, the way he was called changed from “customer” to “brother”. Incidentally, even with such a poor excuse, the smirking storekeeper didn’t seem to be listening.

Currently, Schnee had changed her appearance with a skill. With blond hair, red eyes, and a ponytail hairstyle, her impression appeared to be more energetic than usual.

Therefore, the collection of gazes she received from passerbies, was even more than Tiera and Kagerou got combined.

Shin received the wagon while sighing, and then mounted the necessary pulling device on Kagerou. It took some time for the fitting, because it was originally meant to be mounted on a horse, but he adjusted it using a skill in secret and kept up the appearance.

“Is it tight?”

“Guru”

Kagerou nodded, telling Shin that it didn’t have any problems. It felt no constraints, even when Shin took it for a light run. Though the wagon’s weight should be more than normal, it didn’t seem to be a burden judging from Kagerou.

“Then, shall we depart?”

“Kuu!”

“Guruu!”

While hearing enthusiastic voices from the monsters, the carriage began to move slowly. Was it the result of his remodeling? The shaking had been considerably lessened.

“Amazing, it doesn’t shake at all.”

Tiera widened her eyes in amazement.

“Fuh, this is the result of my remodeling. Aren’t you glad I did it?”

“Now that I know this to be this comfortable, I won’t be able to ride a normal carriage anymore.”

There were personalized cushions laid out for each of them, so the vibration wouldn't make their buttocks sore. From a person who knew the shaking of an ordinary wagon, the difference in comfort was like heaven and earth. What Tiera said was also understandable.

"I see, it's been modified, huh?"

Schnee also felt admiration as she looked around the wagon.

"Yes, originally I thought of excluding the extra bearing, but I knew I could improve it more if I tried. I thought why not do it on this opportunity, as it really is harsh to be inside a shaking wagon for a long period of time."

"It is indeed. Isn't the performance better than the carriage of the royal family?"

"I'm not that rash to go all out there though…"

"In present times, there are no wagons' that don't shake like this one."

Schnee smiled as if she was troubled. Judging from the talk, she was likely to have ridden on the royal family's wagon.

"Long distance travel in this world is really hard."

"There are problems of public peace too, one wrong step could cost you your life."

Monsters and bandits were dangerous too, but even wild animals were plenty of a threat for any ordinary person. For this reason, there existed the work called, bodyguard. For a person who couldn't hire a guard, a trip was really risking their life.

"I think I'll hardly feel danger with these members."

The words that Tiera muttered alone were the truth, too.

To begin with, with a divine beast class monster, Kagerou, pulling the wagon, monsters wouldn't approach directly. Even if a bandit who couldn't measure its power showed up, they would either settle in Kagerou's stomach, or become minced meat by Shin.

There was no problem even if there was somewhat of a travel mood.

"When Shin and I are present, we can generally even do something about a national disaster class problem."

"Master is too almighty."

The speech that came off as arrogance was incorrigible, simply because it was reality. Even with only Schnee, she was already a national class in regards of war potential.

"Kuu! Yuzuha also here, so it will be all right!"

"Guruu!"

The two of them agreed with Schnee's words. That scene was exactly like a pet seeking approval from its master.

"As long as it's trustworthy."

The words Shin muttered while smiling wryly were not heard as they dissolved in the hustle and bustle.

"But well, to modify it to not attract attention, it stands out in a different way."

"Mou, this couldn't be helped."

In addition to the combination of Schnee and Tiera that would attract public eyes, there was Kagerou, too. There was no way that this group wouldn't stand out.

After all, they were continuously exposed to public eyes from the surroundings until they left the gate.

◆◆◆◆

Shin's party departed from Beirun. Kagerou's movement speed was not comparable with a normal wagon; when it ran for a while, all presences of people disappeared.

"It's alright if it's here. Schnee, can you come over here for a moment? I want to ask you something."

"Yes, what is it?"

He searched for any surrounding presences, and called out to Schnee after confirming that there was no one around. He had something to discuss with her that couldn't be heard in the neighborhood, though he only now remembered it.

"I completely forgot about it. What was Kagerou's position on the sacred mountain?"

So, he had forgotten to ask this because he was surprised at the appearance of the divine beast, since Kagerou had been found by chance and was brought along, he felt uneasy with its presence.

Basically, for divine beasts, most of them had their own territory, and rarely came out from there. In addition, each of them were followed by their underlings. It was different in the game, but in reality, he couldn't just bring it along like that.

“Let’s see. If I am to say it nicely, it would be symbiosis, but if I must say it in a negative way, it would be freeloader.”

“Hah?”

Due to the anticipation ahead of the unusual answer, Shin couldn’t be helped to have a stupid expression on his face.

A freeloader.

It was not a word he imagined would describe a divine beast.

That symbiosis she mentioned earlier, there might be a another divine beast in this case.

“Is it that? Kagerou was allowed to live in another divine beast’s territory?”

“Yes. There is a monster called Mist Garuda that leads on the sacred mountain, near the summit. Because of that, there are not many ways for Kagerou to be helpful. And Kagerou didn’t appear to have either followers or its own territory.”

The story seemed to have taken a quite special turn. Normally, in the territory of a divine beast, other divine beasts didn’t emerge. Since it was not a game any more, it was possible, but if that was the case, Shin felt a strong sense that something was very wrong.

“I understand this much as we came to a mutual understanding over the Mind Chat. I don’t understand Kagerou as clearly as Yuzuha, but we can compare the information I know.”

“I see. Yuzuha, can you ask?”

“Kuu, leave it to me.”

Yuzuha, who was able to communicate clearly, asked about its circumstances. The conversation that sounded like “Guruguru”, “Kuukuu” continued for a few minutes.

Was she interested in that conversation? Tiera also sat near the coachman's seat. Before long, Yuzuha returned to Shin.

“I got it.”

“Yosh, let's hear it right away.”

“Let me see. Was it the Mist Garuda, now? Though it rules the sacred mountain, originally half of it belonged to Kagerou’s mother. However, its mother was killed by adventurers, and only Kagerou survived.”

“Adventurers, huh?”

Shin had done similar things in the game era, so he felt ashamed.

Of course, he didn’t intend to hunt divine beasts thoughtlessly in this world.

“It desperately ran for its life, and then, it was helped by an elf girl. After that, it tried its best and became strong, though when it returned to the sacred mountain, it could only help in battles, because its mother’s territory was already lost.”

“Elf, huh? Indeed, when I met it, there was a little hostility against me.”

Did she recall the time she met Kagerou for the first time? Schnee nodded as she understood.

"Did it surrender without fighting?"

"Though we did have a contest, if anything, it was a slight degree of testing each other's ability."

Apparently, without showing their whole power, they seemed to understand each other's strength.

"Schnee is very strong and had a nostalgic scent attached to her, that's the reason it accompanied her."

"Nostalgic scent?"

"It said that it was the same scent as Tiera."

"Eh?"

An unexpected answer returned. Shin, who heard it, had an idea pop up by chance.

"The elf girl who helped… was probably Tiera?"

"Kuu, looks like it."

It was totally like a development from a manga, but such a thing was really unexpected in reality. If Shin hadn't arrived, it seemed like their destinies wouldn't intertwine.

"Errr, I wonder when such a thing happened…"

Tiera said as she closed her eyes to search for the memory where she helped Kagerou. She didn't seem to be able to remember it right away.

"Guru"

“It said it was more than 100 years ago.”

“That was when I was still a child… Now that I think about it, I did save an injured puppy.”

The information of Tiera’s age could be guessed, but because circumstances were circumstances, Shin didn’t dig deeper.

Though it was difficult to associate the puppy from back then with Kagerou’s current real figure, it probably didn’t have a brutal appearance when it was a baby. She could understand because it reduced its size to pull the wagon furthermore.

“If I’m not mistaken, there was a severe injury. It was hopeless for me alone, so I asked for mother’s help.”

“Guru”

“Benefactor, it said.”

“And you chose to be tamed? Even if you might not end up meeting Tiera?”

Shin pointed out that doing so was hasty; even if it followed the scent, it might not have met Tiera again.

According to Yuzuha, it seemed to understand that it couldn’t win, even if it fought against Schnee. That being the case, it decided to believe in its own intuition.

By the way, the reason it let Shin pet it quietly too, was because it felt a portion of the strength that he hid. Even if he limited it using a skill so that his true ability wouldn’t come to light, it seemed that he wasn’t able to completely cover it when it came to a monster of Kagerou’s class. It felt an overpowering sense of intimidation that couldn't be compared, even with Schnee, or so Yuzuha informed them of what Kagerou said.

"So that's why it was so docile."

Indeed, it wouldn't let an unfamiliar human touch it just like that. Although it seemed to be no problem for the members here now.

"Then, shall I transfer the master's qualifications to Tiera?"

"Will that be alright? For her level and such."

"If the person in question is accepting, there won't be any problem. It has been verified."

Though Shin raised his doubts, it seemed to be alright.

"Um, master. I don't have the Tamer job, so continuing with this conversation is pointless."

Of course, a special skill was necessary to form a contract. And only a tamer was able to do it.

"In this case, I was thinking of an irregular contract, rather than the said transfer. The contract is canceled temporarily and then made again, right?"

Shin asked.

"Yes. Because a monster that was freed from the contract would return to the wild, it can make a contract with another tamer."

Though it was obvious, this world was a reality. If it was a game, there was no such thing. It was similar in the sense that a monster would return to the wild after the contract cancellation, but something like a re-contract was impossible. After the message of it having returned to the wild, 2 characters disappeared.

As Shin had mentioned, it wouldn't disappear in the way they did in the game.

"No, like I said, I don't have the job."

Tiera didn't get the point.

"It's fine. With this method, Tiera doesn't necessarily need the job."

"Errr, what do you mean?"

Tiera was at a loss for Schnee's words. The reason for her perplexity was because she didn't know the acquisition conditions for the job.

In THE NEW GATE, there were 3 main methods to get the Tamer's job.

1. Accept the contract application from the monster's side, generated at a very low probability. (E/N: Monster proposes contract, player accepts)

2. Inherit the skill, 【Master and Servant Contract】 from another player, and at the same time, acquiring the job.

3. Clear a job acquisition quest.

In Tiera's case, it was falling under no. 1 this time. Though they were supposed to fight until it was driven into a corner, Kagerou was uninterested in fighting, so it became a contract as it was. He understood it since the characters for “Very Low Probability” were included. There were only a few players who obtained the job through method no. 1 in the game age. Even Cashmere of the Rokuten guild hadn’t experienced this, more or less making him realize the low probability to some extent. Though it looked a little like a cheat, there was no benefit in particular.

Therefore, most players received the skill from acquaintances, or obtained it directly through a quest.

“Indeed, then I can do it, too.”

Tiera consented after receiving the explanation from Schnee.

“So, let’s finish this quickly. Kagerou, stop.”

The wagon stopped moving, and everyone hopped off for the time being. The pulling device was detached from Kagerou, and it changed back to its former appearance.

“First, I will cancel the contract.”

When Schnee said so, she stretched out her arm, and Kagerou bowed its head and touched her hand.

“The light in thy future”

“Guru…”

Schnee recited the words of contract cancellation. Then a faint light enveloped Schnee and Kagerou, and vanished after a few seconds. With this, the engraved contract marks on both of them disappeared.

“Now it’s Tiera’s turn.”

“Y-Yes!”

Though she was tense, Tiera stood before Kagerou.

The current Kagerou was in a state without any restrictions. The intimidating feeling released by that body was enough to make a commoner scared, even if Kagerou suppressed it. Combined with that gigantic appearance, Tiera felt the illusion of a force that pushed her into the ground.

“Guruu…”

“I-It’s alright. I can do this.”

With a smile to Kagerou who barked worriedly, Tiera composed herself. There was no hostility from Kagerou. Those eyes too, when looked at properly, were worried about the shaking Tiera.

She took a deep breath, and looked straight at Kagerou. The next moment, a stream of information flowed into her head. A golden light enveloped Tiera’s body, and disappeared after several seconds.

With the guide from the skill she acquired, Tiera recited the words of the contract.

“I, wish to walk with thee.”

“Guru…”

Kagerou barked to answer Tiera’s words. At the same time, Tiera and Kagerou, on each of their left arms, a tattoo with the shape of some kind of flower, emerged.

“That is…oops”

The pattern of the tattoo created ripples in Shin’s memory for an instant.

But since Tiera staggered after that, his thoughts were interrupted, and he caught her as she was about to fall. Because of that, the sense of incongruity he had, was gone along with the waves.

“Are you alright?”

“I’m sorry, somehow I’m losing strength.”

【Master and Servant Contract】 was originally a skill used on a partner who was already weakened substantially. Since there was a huge level difference too, Shin judged that there might be an unexpected burden on the body.

Shin let the tired Tiera rest on the canopy top, and installed the pulling device on Kagerou again. Though Kagerou worried about Tiera, when he said she’d be alright once she took a rest, since the person in question was merely tired, Kagerou began to pull the wagon obediently.

“Hey, Schnee. When you transferred Kagerou to Tiera, was it to protect her after all?”

The carriage has moving forward, and approximately 20 minutes had passed. Shin confirmed that Tiera was still asleep, and opened his mouth.

“Yes. It is as you say.”

She probably knew that she would be asked that question. Without being surprised in particular, Schnee answered.

"After this, we won't always be nearby."

Schnee said it in a flat voice. This was likely one of the reasons she tamed Kagerou in the first place.

Schnee would follow Shin, but for Tiera, it was not necessary to follow him. Though she brought Tiera a little forcibly this time, she intended to let her go free after the affairs were over. It was up to Tiera on how she lived.

However, in the case of her joining Shin with his action, there was the insecure factor of fighting power in the long run. Currently, Tiera's level was 59. Although it went up a little in the battle with monsters and bandits to some extent, it was still low. It goes without saying that the same goes for her stats. Even Rashia, who did power leveling with Shin and Wilhelm, had a much higher level. The equipment necessary to compensate for it was also limited.

That was the reason for the【Master and Servant Contract】. The person who became the master was able to summon their monster partner near oneself in an instant. The danger might decrease if Kagerou was there.

Above all, if Tiera was exposed as staff of Tsuki no Hokora, some insurance for that time was needed. No matter how much she raised her level, if a chosen one appeared, it was impossible for Tiera to deal with them alone. If Kagerou made some serious effort, it would likely end up as overkill, even against a chosen one. But one could expect that the opponent would use any cruel means, so there was no need to show mercy.

Also, if it was Tiera, Kagerou would not to be used for committing crimes.

For Schnee, what kind of life Tiera would choose, though she thought to decide on the coping method, it was unexpectedly easily settled. Of course, since it was possible for her to do something for Tiera indirectly, a different coping action was needed again.

“I didn’t expect that it would turn out like this, though.”

“That is…for an ordinary elf to tame a divine beast, usually one wouldn’t think of doing it. Though, I didn’t think you would bring a divine beast to pull the wagon either.”

“I was aiming for the Mist Garuda actually.”

“Isn’t that the top position in the sacred mountain? That would endanger the ecosystem or the territory in various ways, you should stop that.”

Certainly, bringing the master of a territory would be too much of a problem.

“If Tiera chooses a different path from us, I will look for another monster again.”

“You don’t have to be fixated on another divine beast, you know? You seem ready to pull something like this time again.”

Something like this time, it certainly was Kagerou.

She wasn’t aiming for it, and completely discovered it by chance. However, contrarily it was human nature to be suspicious when it went smoothly up until there. To the chain of events, he felt some kind of artificial destiny.

Shin asked Schnee for a horse substitution, and Schnee came across a divine beast that has a connection with Tiera. The divine beast was reminded of Tiera by the attached scent of Schnee, who was a High Elf, and followed her obediently. And then, it made a contract with Tiera.

The occurrence was too much for it to happen by mere chance.

“Really, for it to somehow move like it was arranged, it makes me uneasy.”

“It’s not a bad sign though.”

If he took it in a good way, it could be said that he was guided to it. Depending on the viewpoint, even if he was dancing in the palm of someone, he couldn’t make a conclusion based on the present situation.

“There! That’s what I mean. How do I put it…basically if it’s malicious, it seems even stranger because I couldn’t see the intentions.”

“In terms of war potential, there is no disadvantage to us, right?”

At present, they didn’t have a big disadvantage. Only at the present, however.

“Well, I won’t understand even if I think about it.”

“If something happens out of my expectation, I cannot do anything but deal with it right away.”

“It couldn’t be helped, huh? As I said earlier, it hasn’t been a long time since I came to this world. In some cases, there might be situations where I can’t make a decision.”

“You’re right. Since a lot of things are different from before, adjusting might be difficult.”

“And to be frank, I will rely on Schnee when it gets really dangerous. So please take care of me at that time.”

“!!...Leave it to me!”

I will rely on Schnee.

As Schnee heard those words, she stopped moving as if struck by thunder. And after a short period of silence, she answered in a firm voice. The expression that overflowed with determination only brightened her pretty face even more.

Because she was relied on, Shin thought it was good to show some motivation. But Shin’s words appeared to be more effective than he thought.

When he looked between her hair, her long ears, which were peculiar to an elf, sometimes twitched and quivered, and her cheeks were also tinged a little reddish. Her lips were twitching like she was enduring something, and when he looked closely, he found out that the corner of her mouth almost rose up.

“Schnee? Are you alright?”

Shin was surprised at the unexpected reaction from Schnee. Though he intended to understand Schnee’s feelings for him, he didn’t expect that this much of a reaction would come out. Having said that he would rely on Schnee, he was including Tsuki no Hokora that he carried, Tiera, and the monsters’ company, because he thought it would make a big difference in dealing with an emergency.

Of course, no one could rival Shin’s dependability of Schnee, but did he flip a switch? Shin was anxious.

“I’m alright. No problem at all…….that surprise attack, it’s unfair.”

While she answered Shin, Schnee vented out her emotions in a faint voice. The voice was covered by the sound of the moving carriage, so it didn’t reach Shin’s ears.

Schnee was a young lady, too. To the companion whom she longed for, it was impossible for her not to be happy when told she would be relied on and so forth.

She was counted on. How long did she wait for that moment. The joy that erupted next, no one in that place could understand it. Contrary to motivation, the face that almost broke out into a smile was tightened by force. In some way or another, she maintained a front as hard as possible.

“Well, that. Please do.”

With moistened eyes and a reddened face, coupled with the strange romance that appeared, as he glanced at Schnee, Shin issued instructions to Kagerou. The speed was about 1.5 times that of a normal carriage when it was doubled, and the scenery of the surroundings flowed by faster. The wind that blew against their faces became stronger, too.

While thinking that it would be nice if his face didn’t redden, Shin stared ahead.

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Chapter 2 Part 3

It was an easy route, comparatively, for one week. Without being attacked by any monsters or bandits, the trip advanced smoothly. From Beirun, there was a large forested area, which was called Larua Grand Woods, and the wagon traveled along its borders.

The wear and tear of the wagon was intense due to Kagerou's speed, but it still didn't break because of the good craftsmanship. However, maintenance would be necessary when they arrived at Falnido.

"It's normally impossible to come all the way up here in one week."

Tiera muttered alone while looking at the map. If it was a normal carriage, even when it advanced quickly, at this time they would only have covered around one-fifth of the way, and yet they had already covered four-fifths of the whole distance. There was hardly any shaking, thanks to the modifications before the trip, so he didn't have to worry about Tiera and the others, even if he sped up.

If he had done the same thing with a normal wagon, it probably wouldn't have held up for even an hour. Especially the passengers inside.

"Even with this speed, I have gotten completely used to it."

"It can be faster than this. But the wagon wouldn't last."

"Don't raise it any further, it's scary…"

Currently, their speed was about 60km per hour(T/N: About 38 mph). Because of the terrain, that speed was not always maintained.

However, after Tiera became accustomed to it, they moved at a speed about 3-4 times faster than a normal wagon. For Kagerou, it was somehow fast, since its stamina to maintain the speed was off the charts.

Most of the inhabitants of this world have never experienced that kind of speed.

Although Tiera's face showed no reaction at the moment, her face had been blue while yelling "Too fast! Too fast!" repeatedly when Shin raised the speed in the beginning. She didn't seem to be able to feel relief even when she saw how calm Shin and Schnee were.

"With this pace, we should arrive in another 2 or 3 days, huh?"

"That's right. I think around then."

Contrary to the calm conversation, the wagon traveled on the grassy plains at a blistering speed. Not only animals, but monsters also ran away immediately when they saw the carriage.

"For monsters to clear the road for me, I'm seeing it for the first time."

"Because the one pulling us is Kagerou. It's far from being reckless."

Shin said that while giving instructions to Kagerou. The direction of Kagerou's running changed depending on those instructions. Avoiding big cavities in the ground while running in a zigzag line, the wagon easily sped across the grassy plains.

They got through the grassy plains in one day. A forest came into view in the direction of their movement, and there were some reactions within Shin’s range of perception.

“Schnee, Tiera. There is something up ahead. Be cautious, just in case.”

While giving instructions to drop the speed to Kagerou, he called out to the two people in the wagon.

Yuzuha, as usual, was on top of Shin’s head. It’s attitude was alert even without having been told.

“This is…are they being chased by something?”

Shin muttered while looking at the map displayed in his view. Judging from the speed, it might be riding a horse. It was faster than a running human, and the multiple responses were heading toward Shin and the others.

Behind them, a response came from a monster.

“They are being chased.”

“Um, naturally I don’t understand even if you guys say something like that.”

“Mmm~, I can’t see them…”

They seemed to already have entered Schnee’s range of perception, and she gave the same judgment as Shin.

Neither Tiera nor Yuzuha could grasp the situation. It was only natural, as they were still several kemels away.

“At this rate, we are going to clash. Should we change our lane?”

"Eh, we aren't going to help?"

"Whether they were attacked or not, it's hard to judge by the composition."

While having a difficult face, Shin told Tiera about the other party that was coming straight toward them.

The number of people who were on horseback numbered five. There were people of level 40 and exceeding 200 in the center, and three people around level 150 surrounding them.

Three Guardian Golems at Lv. 430 were chasing them from behind. If Shin's memories were correct, the Guardian Golem acted as a gatekeeper for a dungeon; it was a monster that was supposed to serve as protectors of treasure. At least, it didn't attack a person indiscriminately.

If that characteristic was still in effect, it meant that the 5 people who were escaping were being chased because they were guilty of something.

"Indeed. It will bring us harm if we thoughtlessly help."

"That's what she said. You might say it's because the monsters from the golem group sometimes run wildly without any meaning, but I cannot affirm that."

Like this time, it was very likely the model that persistently ran after the opponent. At the same time, there might be something nearby that was unknown to Shin, something that the golems were protecting.

"If I might add another possibility, the golems were protecting a secret, for example, an item, and they stole it and ran away."

“That’s the most troublesome one.”

The golems that guard a treasure chest would chase the stolen item until the ends of the earth. It could be said that it was the last form they wanted to be associated with.

“I’d understand if that is the reason they went wild when I see it, but…”

The golems, when in a state of running wildly, were clear at a glance, because mana was emanated from the core to its whole body. The problem was that it was not understandable just by looking.

“I can’t tell the difference with 【Analyze】.”

In【Analyze】, except for the official record of the wild golems, it was usually indistinguishable from a normal golem.

“…There’s no point in continuing the matter by prediction alone. I will help if they are really being attacked, otherwise I will kill them if they started the problem. Let’s adapt to the circumstances for the moment.”

“Okay.”

“Roger.”

“Kuu”

He assumed it would be the worst type and got prepared just in case. The driver was Shin. Schnee and Tiera hid themselves inside the wagon’s canopy.

“For the time being, all members put on cloaks. One of those escaping is a noble. Even though I don’t know what they are doing, I don’t want our faces to be remembered.”

Because the illusion skill would be removed if they took off the cloaks, it was still better than nothing.

“They will reach us anytime now. Kagerou, please slowly reduce the speed.”

“Guru”

They advanced for a little while along the road when he saw the cloud of dust that was whirled up by the golems, and he dropped the speed of the wagon. Shin confirmed the armored men who rode the horses with an eyesight strengthened by a skill.

“…It’s the troublesome type.”

He sighed while saying a few words. That was Shin’s guess from the scene that was reflected in his view.

In front of Shin and the others’ line of sight, a man in armor riding on a horse, who seemed to be leading the group, made an appearance. And then, there was a low-level man and a man who seemed to be his guard, appeared successively. And lastly, two horsemen with a little delay appeared.

The men with armor seemed to be really experienced in combat. On the other hand, the low-level man wore clothes that gave off a luxurious feeling of material. A word that explained his body: obesity. He held a cup that shined like silver in one hand.

【Analyze】 displayed the name of the cup. Shin, who saw it, grimaced in a big way.

“They don’t seem to have been attacked without reason.”

“Schnee’s prediction is a strike. That guy who is yelling has a Holy Grail of Rotten Malice.”

Treasure chests existed in dungeons of regular rank and above. One of the items could be obtained at random from there.

Considering the situation, Schnee was right; it was likely that they only collected the item and ran away.

“I’m going for a moment. I’ll leave the defense to you.”

While taking out a card from the Item Box, Shin got off of the wagon. In the next moment, he disappeared with a Hiding skill.

In the coachman’s seat, Schnee now sat instead of Shin. Because there was a distance between the two groups, the movement of the two people couldn’t be seen by the side that was running away.

While hidden, Shin approached the men who escaped. Then, he heard the low-level man who was ranting louder than the sound of the horses’ hooves.

“What have you done!? They are catching up! Can’t you go faster!?”

“I’m afraid this is the limit!! If you just throw that thing away, the golems might stop chasing us!!”

Looking ahead, a guardsman answered. That face clearly showed that this situation was not the man’s real intention. As for the other men, they were making similarly ugly faces.

“Damnnit, this pig guy is misusing his power. If I was holding it, I would have already thrown it away.”

Shin strengthened his hearing, and caught the murmur of the man who lead the group.

(There seem to be some circumstances. Given this situation, all of them will be killed immediately in the end.)

Though he didn’t know the reason, the guards didn’t seem to be cooperating willingly.

The distance between them and the wagon which Schnee rode on was getting smaller.

“Hey! That wagon! Make that a decoy and let’s escape! It might earn us a bit of time!!”

“Wha!? Don’t joke around!! Do you know what you’re saying!?”

“It’s you guys who are joking around! Do you understand what happens if I don’t return!”

At the words which the low-level man said, when he looked at the wagon, a guard shouted back. As one might expect, the guard couldn’t hold his anger.

(He might be using the guards’ weaknesses. Even if he did something to that low-level, it wouldn’t solve the problem)

While watching the exchange of the two people, Shin decided to act.

He could kill only that low-level man, but then the situation of the guardsmen would worsen.

Judging from 【Analyze】, the job of the low-level man was priest. It was no doubt that he was a church official. And from his attitude and appearance, he was probably a priest with a high-rank.

When Shin thought up to there, everyone in the orphanage came to mind.

(…Don’t tell me, this guy is that pig bishop in question.)

Partly because of the ‘pig guy’ remark he had heard a little while ago, Shin was convinced that he identified the low-leveled man correctly. Though there was no conclusive evidence, he wouldn’t let him steal the item just like that.

(I will switch the item with a counterfeit.)

The cup, which that low-level man held, was quickly exchanged with an imitation. It looked exactly the same, but only in appearance; it was now a joke material item.

The holy grail was turned into a card, and stored away in his Item Box. With Shin having snatched the item, the target of the Guardian Golems moved to Shin. Because he didn’t want them to notice that, he traveled side by side with them for a while.

“(Schnee, can you make a scene where you run away when the golems attack the wagon with the illusion skill?)”

“(I can do it, though do you want to let them escape?)”

“(There seem to be some circumstances here. It’s just one person who is the root of all of these problems.)”

“(I see. I understand. Should I refrain from counterattacking even if they do something?)”

“(Do so.)”

He made an arrangement with Schnee via Mind Chat. If one looked properly at the carriage, Kagerou had also been clad with the illusion of a common horse. To the men’s eyes, it would only look like a horse. Since Kagerou stood out, Schnee seemed to have made a smart move.

“The wheels! They can’t run away immediately if you break the wheels! Break them when we pass each other!!”

“For a guy like you to say something like that!!”

While Shin acted separately, the low-leveled man’s instructions went in a cruel direction. Of course, the guard tried to refuse. However, he finally pulled out the sword from the sheath at his waist and lowered it due to the words of the low-level man.

That face was filled with bitterness. The thing which the guardsman tried to protect, him or them, he wanted to protect even if he got his hands dirty.

The man’s sword destroyed the wheels on one side when they passed each other, making it impossible for the wagon to advance.

“…Sorry.”

A faint mumble leaked out as anguish appeared on the guard’s crooked facial expression; it clearly expressed the man’s feelings.

“It’s difficult…”

Shin muttered while seeing those men gallop away. In the eyes of the man who looked back, the destroyed wagon and Shin’s group trying to escape was reflected.

"Now then, shall we finish it up?"

He turned around, and prepared for the Guardian Golems that were approaching from behind.

Although he also could just return the item to the Guardian Golems, the Holy Grail of Rotten Malice was very dangerous when misused. Therefore, it was too bad for the Guardian Golems, but he decided to retrieve it here.

"Those golems are a precious raw material. It's useful for remodeling the wagon."

He asked Schnee to be cautious and hide in the surroundings, then faced the Guardian Golems.

Even if the Guardian Golems were in front of Shin, he charged without faltering. Since they were not living beings, they were not affected by Shin's overpowering presence. Their gigantic build reached about 3 mels in total height, and they were closing in on Shin while raising a cloud of dust.

"Swish!!"

Without changing the momentum of his charge, he dodged a fist, and they passed each other as he swung his katana. The slash that hit the Guardian Golem broke through the high defense that was a characteristic of the Golem group monsters without difficulty, and its left leg was sliced off.

Shin changed his running direction and aimed for the golem's core after it lost its balance and fell down. The core was located in the center of the body from behind, which Shin pierced through with his katana. Though the Guardian Golem moved its body as it suffered, it slowly stopped moving after Shin twisted his katana to tear and crush the core.

The two Guardian Golems that were left attacked Shin when his movements stopped after he dealt the finishing blow. With Shin's katana sticking out of the core, the two bodies swung their fists downward like hammers.

"Boom!!"

Shin parted with his katana, turned around and held out his right fist. With the barehanded system martial arts skill 【Steel Repel】 activated, his fist clashed with the fist of the Guardian Golem. Following that, the thick sound of metal being hit resounded. Shin's fist didn't seem to be much of a rival, but the golem's fist, which was almost 1 mel wide, was repelled. That recoil caused the Guardian Golem to lose its posture and stumble backward. Various big and small cracks traveled across the fist that collided with Shin's own.

Shin didn't pay attention to the stunned Guardian Golem, and twisted his body with the momentum of the swung right hand. And then, toward the other Guardian Golem that was closing in a little bit more slowly, he unleashed a skill from his left palm.

Barehanded system martial art skill 【Transparent Wave】—— a vibration wave that destroyed the internal parts of the body was transmitted through the Guardian Golem's fist from Shin's palm. Was the power too strong? It was over in an instant, as the Guardian Golem's body shook a little, before half of it got blown away. Among the shattered pieces, the core seemed to be mixed in, too. The remaining half of the body fell down to the ground like a broken doll.

"This…can't be used on a living being."

Shin muttered while seeing the Guardian Golem shattered. If the opponent was a living thing, it would be a painful scene to look at.

He made a mental note in his mind, and faced the last golem. The Guardian Golem that fell on it's back didn't seem to flinch at all, even though the other two were already knocked down. At the same time as it was getting up, it naively turned its fists toward Shin.

Before the punch arrived, Shin fired magic toward the final Guardian Golem.

It was the earth system magic skill, 【Earth Spear】. The magic that was released immediately showed its effect; the earth right underneath the Guardian Golem shot upward and simultaneously became a spear that attacked its target. The earth spear was reinforced with Shin's magic, and ran straight through the core of the Guardian Golem, as it ceased to function.

"An elementary level magic skill of the Earth system can take down a golem exceeding level 400, huh?"

Shin tested two skills as an experiment, since there were a few golems. 【Transparent Wave】 seemed to be effective against monsters which have a high defense, such as golems. However, a very grotesque spectacle might occur if he used it on a living being. By the way, after he had used it, he had a feeling that adjustment of the skill's power was possible.

As for 【Earth Spear】, was it because of Shin's magic power? It's power had increased considerably. Though the increase in power itself was obvious, he hadn't thought that the defense of golems surpassing level 400 would break so easily. Anyways, earth system magic skills were the first skills one obtained in the game. Though it was useful for traps and surprise attacks, there was no power behind it until now.

Soon after coming to this world, he was only able to test the operations of a few skills, but Shin once again thought that it was necessary to train.

“Now then, time to collect the raw materials”

When he concluded the matter in his mind, he moved on to retrieving the raw materials. However, the only thing he collected was the golems’ fragments, which he then changed into Item Cards. From the Guardian Golems, one could harvest magic steel, while even small amounts of orichalcum could be retrieved, so he didn’t forget to collect even the smaller pieces.

When he collected everything, Shin returned to Schnee’s location.

“Good job for today.”

“That one too, so what’s your impression on the damage?”

“The right wheels were completely destroyed. The axles were broken too, as they slumped against the ground afterward.”

Schnee and the others got off the carriage and waited. Schnee, who heard the report about the broken wheels, got off from the wagon earlier and cast an illusion.

As for the wagon, the wheels were destroyed and one side of the carrier had sunk into the ground. When it lost its balance and touched the ground, it didn’t seem to be able to endure the weight of the carrier, so the axles broke completely. It was also probably influenced by the violent speeding earlier. When he looked more closely, they were pretty much worn out.

“It’s totally broken. Should I make it more sturdy on this occasion?”

He made the carrier float with a skill, and removed the broken axles. Taking advantage of this situation, he took out parts for the wagon that were long stored in his Item Box. Even if it wasn't his specialty, it was still a production job. While raising a skill, parts he made couldn't help but pile up to an excessive amount.

He removed the wheels to change out the broken axlex, while at the same time, he remodeled it to reduce vibrations. The newly installed parts gave off the appearance of wood. However, for a human specialized in that field, if they were not an expert craftsman, they wouldn't be able to grasp the unnatural gloss on its surface.

That shine was the adamantine coating, which only Shin and Schnee had in this world.

"It's finished."

"…Something, feels strange."

"It's just your imagination."

Tiera was going to ascertain the strange feeling with the power of observation, but because of her lack of knowledge, she gave up on it. Nonchalantly, Schnee also diverted her attention.

When the repairs were over, they began to depart. The wagon's performance rose significantly compared to before the repair, and pushed onward in spite of the bad road.

After moving for an additional 2 days, the party finally reached the end of the Larua Grand Woods, and arrived at Falnido.

Shin and the others were in the southeastern part of Falnido. Probably because the grand wooded region was adjacent to Larua Grand Woods, it wasn't dense, but the scenery of the forest across the border was extended. Was it different vegetation? While Larua Grand Woods was a densely packed area close to a jungle, Falnido's forest gave off the impression of small animals living peacefully.

Although the forest was spread out, naturally there was a border. According to Schnee, there were guard troops, too.

The road that lead to the country was maintained; there was no need to charge through a trackless path. On the main road that continued to Falnido from the plains, Shin's troupe advanced slowly. They might be taken as suspicious fellows and be restrained if they increased their speed here.

Schnee sent out a message card, to inform Girard of their arrival.

"Hmm? Someone's coming. Their levels are quite high."

About 10 minutes had passed since they entered inside the forest through the road. Shin sensed someone heading toward the carriage in a straight line. There were two of them. Their levels were 210 and 179 respectively.

"Since I already sent a message to Girard some time ago, I think it's the people who are coming to welcome us."

Because they couldn't afford to just call him a High Human, she seemed to have requested a reliable person to guide them. Schnee, who appeared to remember the two people, casually sat next to Shin.

The wagon stopped for a few minutes, and a pair of Beast-men appeared from the forest.

“As expected, you guys came.”

“Yes. I received a decree from the Founder whom you are visiting.”

The one who responded to Schnee’s words had gray hair and deep green eyes was a man with masculine looks. There was no opening in that standing posture, so it was clear that he could cope on the spot if something happened. He looked to be in his late 20s; for this world’s standard, considering his level, Shin felt he was pretty young.

“That person is, the one who was mentioned?”

“That’s right, this is him. Because it’s somewhat difficult to introduce him here, I asked for a guide from Girard.”

“I understand. We will be the guide to our city, Elden. Follow me.”

The man moved to the front of the wagon with that reply. Shin made the wagon advance to match the speed of the man running.

“Cuore seems healthy, too.”

“Yes! Schnee-sama also seems healthy above all.”

Having answered in a brisk tone, was the woman called Cuore. Identical to the man who was described just now, she was a beautiful girl with gray hair and deep green eyes. The length of her hair was shoulder length. Shin saw that the only part that was lengthened was the part at the back of her neck. She talked like a warrior, and gave off the impression that she was popular with the same-sex.

Judging from the friendly conversation, Schnee and the two people appeared to be acquainted since olden days.

“Have you been acquaintances for long time?”

“I was there when she was born. I also trained her.”

“Heh…a Chosen One?”

“The implication might be different, but she has enough power that it could be said she is a chosen one. After all, it’s because she is Girard’s direct descendant.”

“What!? …Is that so? If that beast has great-grandchildren, let alone great-great-grandchildren…, no…, anymore would not be strange.”

When he thought of Girard’s original life, Girard was married to his wife, and it wouldn’t be strange for him to have a child. Since he couldn’t live for several hundreds of years like elves and pixies.

“Hmm? Have we arrived?”

After the man had run for a while, he signaled for them to stop in front of the ramparts that came into view. When Shin looked at the ramparts, he discovered that some parts of the wall were camouflaged to make it look ordinary.

Apparently, there was a concealed door somewhere or another. The width was enough to let about one carriage pass, and there was not much height either. This might be a gate to let the forthcoming company go through incognito, like at this time. The soldiers who were on guard were likely chosen ones, too.

“How about the wagon?”

“In this case, I should change it into a card.”

Because the parts he used for remodeling might be suspicious in this world, he put it away in the Item Box, just in case. It could be said that the moment he started remodeling it, the option of selling it was already gone.

Kagerou was released from wagon pulling duty, obviously changing into a small body, so that Tiera could hold it.

They moved from the open space where they stopped the wagon to go through the tunnel, so they could meet Girard who was ahead. They then entered a building, and advanced toward the underground from there.

“Somehow, I feel out of place.”

“What are you saying, an employee of Tsuki no Hokora is a legitimate person concerning the people.”

As they were guided along the way, Shin encouraged the nervous Tiera. Since she was in the shop for more than 100 years, she was pretty much family as far as Shin saw it.

According to Shin’s memory, Girard was not the type that worried about trivial things, so it shouldn’t be an issue.

“You don’t have to be so nervous, because I already told him about you, Tiera.”

“Even if that is so, it’s impossible for me to relax…”

From a commoner’s viewpoint, the person whom she was about to face after this, was a person who was on such a whole different level, that it was only possible to encounter them once in a lifetime. It was normal to feel small. Just because she was close to the existence named

Schnee, didn’t mean she was able to get close to other similar members.

“Prepare yourself. We have arrived.”

While they were talking, it seemed like they had reached the end of the tunnel. Beyond what appeared to be above ground, there was a building like a Japanese samurai residence.

There was no gate, but everything from the roof tiles, to the paper sliding doors, it was like a full-scale replica that seemed to be able to be used for a historical drama.

“This way.”

The man invited them in with a few words. They took off their shoes at the entrance, and proceeded to the depth of the residence through the veranda.

In front of a room in the house, the man who guided them stopped his pace.

“I have brought Schnee and her companions.”

“Ou, come in.”

The answer was received, and the man opened the paper sliding door. There were three people in the room.

Before long, Shin recognized one of them. Sitting in front of him was a Wolf Type High Beast, his support character no. 3. It was Girard Estaria.

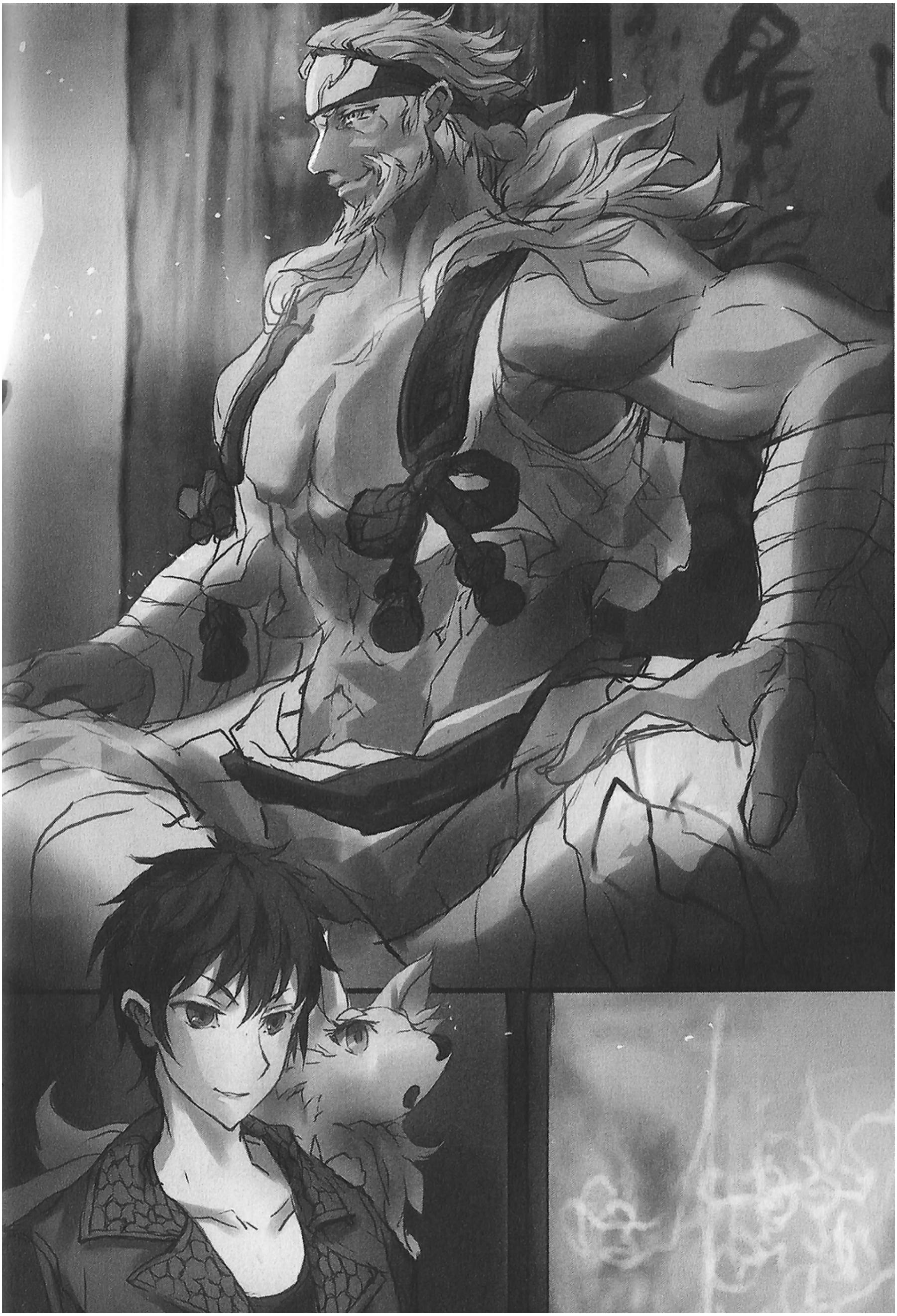
From Shin’s point of view, there was an Elephant Type on his left, and a Turtle Type to his right side, but Shin had no memory of them. Both were level 255. They might be Girard's trusted confidants.

Following the man, Shin, Schnee and Tiera entered the room. Of course, Yuzuha and Kagerou followed along too.

Shin was in the center, Schnee and Tiera were on his left and right respectively, and Girard opened his mouth to talk.

"Ou, Master-dono. I never thought I'd live until the day I saw you again."

Girard's voice, which he now heard for the first time after coming to this world, and one that Shin used to hear all the time, was a low and deep voice.



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“Same here, I never thought that you would still be alive.”

Similar to Girard's first opinion, Shin too, answered back.

Unlike the beasts that were sitting down on his right and left, Girard was a Human Type now. Wrinkles had increased on his face, and his hair had whitened.

However, even if his appearance looked old, the presence that emanated from that body, Shin thought that not even a particle of it had become weak. At least, he didn't look like he would die any time soon. That arrogant tone seemed to be the same as before, too.

"Kukuku, that is right. I don't know why I'm still alive either. Because I might die suddenly, everyone around me is worried."

"Well that, you shouldn't be laughing at that."

While saying things that he shouldn't joke about, Girard laughed heartily. As for the beasts who sat on his right and left, they were in a shocked state and also sighed while nodding in agreement at Shin's remark.

"Now then, there is great deal to talk about too and the story has been accumulating, but I have to introduce these guys before that."

Saying so, Girard introduced the man and woman who guided Shin and his party, while sitting down between the beasts.

"This guy is the current Beast King, Wolfgang. And this here is Wolfgang's daughter, Cuore."

"I am Wolfgang Estaria. Please to make your acquaintance hereafter."

"I'm Cuore Estaria! It's an honor to meet you!"

Introduced by Girard, the two beasts lowered their heads respectively.

Wolfgang looked composed, but Cuore seemed to have gotten a little bit excited.

“And, these two people are my trusted friends. Van and Rajim.”

“King’s right arm, Van Kuu.”

“King’s left arm, Rajim Dolku.”

The two beasts said no more than that and calmly bowed. Their shocked states from a while ago disappeared, and they now wore serious expressions.

The one who introduced himself as Van was an elephant, and Rajim as a turtle beast, were known. The position where they were seated seemed to be corresponding to each arm. The right was Van, the left was Rajim.

“I’m Shin. You might have already heard it, but I’m a High Human. I hope to get along with you.”

Shin too introduced himself and bowed. That humble attitude was not the same dignity as those who transcend and were talked about among the people.

From the beginning, he didn’t have the intention of doing it with an air of superiority.

“Kuku, master said it like usual. There’s no profit even if you are being modest here.”

“Well, because I shouldn’t talk so casually to a king I just met. It’s common to call them by name. You originally wouldn't call them by such a name."

"A reunion after such a long time. I want you to forgive me for making a joke like this. Besides, Shin, we know how much High Humans are an irresponsible existence. Then, I should understand such a reaction coming back."

"Good grief, this guy. Well, if you know about the things we have done, you should understand."

For a resident of this world, a High Human was a legendary existence, and also an object of fear at the same time.

They sank a city into a sea of flames and hunted divine beasts. It was an existence that really accomplished what people usually thought to be a joke.

And now, amongst the long-lived races such as elves and pixies, which have seen such spectacles, many were still alive, spreading stories about the mighty power of High Humans.

Moreover, if Schnee and Girard, who were merely subordinates, have shown such a phenomenal power, one could only imagine how mighty of an existence the one they followed was.

For a person who governs a country, bowing their head to one with such power was trivial, just done to flatter them. It was a might so great that any king voluntarily does such a welcome.

"For the time being, let's talk normally, whether or not I can erase a country on a whim doesn't matter. This way, I feel I can talk to a friend."

In a defiant attitude, Shin asked Wolfgang to talk in his normal tone.

“Is that alright?”

“It’s better to ask here.”

Shin answered immediately.

Though he had made a mess of various things in the game, he was aware that he was known as a legend. However, from Shin’s point of view, even if he didn’t remember that he had done anything, other than the game era, for him to be worshiped made him uncomfortable.

The reason was different from respect as a high player during the time of the game.

“Cuore-san, Van-san, Rajim-san too, please do the same.”

“IS IT FINE!?”

“Princess, please calm yourself a little.”

“But Van, he himself said it’s fine!”

The high-spirited Cuore gave Shin the impression of a fan who met their idol. Though when they met for the first time she had a dignified appearance, there was not even a shadow of that left. It was an absurd ‘change’.

“Shin-dono is our Patriarch beast king, Girard-sama’s master. Don’t use the honorific title for us either, we don’t mind if you call us by our first names.”

“That was an unintentional mistake created by the dignified presence just now.”

In the place of Van who calmed down Cuore, Rajim talked with Shin. For the person whom Girard pledged his allegiance to, using the honorific titles, the style might go mad.

“Then, it will be easy to talk if Rajim and the others speak comfortably, too. Since it’s more comfortable for me and I feel more at ease that way.”

“If Shin-dono says so, I will have the privilege of doing so. Because this is my most comfortable way of speaking. Please understand.”

Because of the warrior personage which Shin had gotten an impression of, he thought Rajim was going to decline, but he seemed to be surprisingly adaptable. Since Girard was not holding back, that might be the influencing effect.

“By the way, Shin. Now I want to hear about the young lady and the divine beasts over there.”

In a somewhat friendly way, Girard shifted his attention to Tiera and the monsters. About Yuzuha and Kagerou being divine beasts, he seemed to have already found out.

“I’m sorry for the late introduction. She is Tiera. She was the one who looked after Tsuki no Hokora.”

“Nice to meet you. I am Tiera Lucent. For Tsuki no Hokora, I am very grateful.”

Her behaviour from before entering the room had completely changed, Tiera perfectly managed her behaviour, and even performed good etiquette. The strained appearance was nowhere to be seen. Not even stiffening up, she faced everyone in Falnido in a natural manner.

Shin may have seen it in a different way, as a defiant attitude, because she was too tense.

“And the fox here is Yuzuha, that wolf pup is Kagerou. I’ll tell you just in case, but their races are Element Tail and Gruefago.”

“Hoh.”

“It can’t be…the legendary…?”

“C-Cute…”

While Yuzuha, who had become small next to Shin, and Kagerou, who was held by Tiera, were looked at alternately, Girard had a smiling face, like a mischievous boy grinning.

In contrast to him, Wolfgang and Cuore opened their eyes wide in surprise. To a certain extent, Shin had a feeling that Cuore’s shock was pointed in a different direction.

Though neither Van nor Rajim reacted in a big way, they gave a small nod, as if they thought it was as expected from a High Human.

“Same as ever, you never lack on subjects.”

“It’s not like I aim for that in particular.”

“Kuku, it’s a good thing not to be bored. Then, the story has piled up, but you all must be tired from the long journey. The young lady looks like a commoner. Lead them to their rooms for the moment. After having cleansed your bodies in the baths, let’s have a meal together.”

The current time was 4:30 P.M. Apart from Shin and Schnee, because Tiera showed fatigue as expected, he seemed to be worried.

Wolfgang and Cuore returned to work temporarily, and would join them for a meal later on.

“Ah, that’s right. Shin, come here for a minute.”

When he was about to move, Girard called out to Shin.

“What is it?”

“Let’s make a party. There will be some talks later on.”

“I understand.”

Apparently, there was something secret he wanted to talk about. For a party created in the old generation version, Mind Chat was available anytime.

Van and Rajim lead them to their rooms.

With a private room each, the interior of all rooms were decorated with a chest of drawers on tatami mats next to a hanging scroll, just like a samurai residence.

“(Shin. I’m sorry about being so sudden, but can you keep me company for just a little?)”

“(Okay, I will go there right away, so wait for me.)”

While Shin was looking at the interior of the room, a message came through Mind Chat from Girard. For some reason, he didn’t have a good premonition. However, there was nothing he could do but comply with him, and therefore headed toward Girard with the help of a map.

Though this was a digression; the simple map projected in Shin's view before he knew it, the map drawing function was restored like it was during the time of the game. Because of that, he could completely understand the structure inside the samurai residence.

"Oh, here you are."

As Shin preceded while checking with the map, he discovered Girard who was looking at the garden while sitting on the veranda. Was it to match the style of the house? He was wearing a kimono.

"You came. Please sit down. The tea will come soon."

"Well then, I won't hesitate."

He sat on a prepared cushion, and Shin paid attention to the garden Girard was looking at. As for the vast garden, there were both a pond and a stone garden where the greenery was well arranged. Even Shin, who didn't know much about such things, was somehow able to recognize that it was an excellent garden.

Before long, Schnee arrived with a tea set. The tea seemed to have been prepared by Schnee.

"Now then, where should I start talking from?"

"If it's about the heroic story of Girard founding a country, I have already heard it from Schnee."

"Oioi, did you tell him about it earlier? I was gonna brag about it."

"If you were the one telling it, I thought you were going to exaggerate the contents, so I conveyed the truth of what I saw objectively.”

Schnee answered with a smile, to Girard who was disappointed. Knowing the temper of her fellow companion, she replied without hesitating.

“It can’t be helped. Leaving my heroic tale aside. In exchange, please tell me about Shin’s circumstances instead. I received the message, but not the minor details that weren’t written.”

“Is that so, though I already told Schnee, to tell you the truth————”

Just like at the time with Schnee, he explained to Girard how he ended up here.

“I see. That explains why no matter how much I looked for you, not even a single clue was found.”

Girard, who had now heard his circumstances, nodded. Girard had searched countless times for Shin. Since he shared information with Schnee, he knew that difficulty well.

“Even so, Shin too, don’t let this mysterious thing bother you.”

“Indeed. Well, though not everything, helping out isn’t all bad.”

Girard wore an expression seemingly wanting to say “Yareyare”. Because Girard was relieved as he felt sorry for the person concerned, Shin was slightly touched.

“Is that so? That’s right. At least it’s a good thing to me.”

“Girard?”

Girard's mood changed. The sensation that Shin felt, pricking his skin, it was the aura that Girard wore.

"Now let's get down to the main point. Shin, I must tell you something."

".....What is it?"

Anticipation appeared in Shin's mind. However, he calmly asked again, without showing it on his face.

"I am going to die soon. It's not long now. Perhaps, I won't last for even one more month."

"What do you mean?"

At the least, the Girard who was before his eyes didn't seem like he was going to die in about a month's time. Rather, his body, with which it wouldn't be strange if he stayed alive for several more decades, unleashed a suitable presence.

"I've felt an uncomfortable feeling for several weeks now, and I was convinced when I read Schnee's message. Inside me, the stopped time has started moving again."

"As if it was waiting for Shin to return."

Schnee also added.

"If God exists in this world, it might have granted my wish."

"Wish?"

It might be the content of the main point. Girard looked straight at

Shin, and opened his mouth.

“It’s a match, Shin. You…me, I want to fight against you.”

“Girard…You…”

In the situation where his life span has shortened considerably, he asked for a match.

Even if Girard didn’t say everything, Shin understood well what Girard wanted to say.

(You want to die in a battle?)

Girard was a warrior. Not as a job, but as a way of life.

For this reason, he couldn’t help but think about it. More importantly, it was a fight against Shin who was the strongest warrior at the same time.

He never had a duel in the game era, a one on one duel with Shin, that is.

How far could he reach with his fists and skills against a transcended person? Not as a Beast King, and not as a support character either. Just as a warrior, he wanted to challenge the summit.

“It’s my last wish. Can you accept it?”

Girard’s eyes conveyed that there was no way more suited to burn the last of his lifeforce. Unaffected by old age, his fighting spirit was still burning brightly; there was no option for Shin to decline.

For example, if comrades who walked together before wished it, even if it lead down a path that would continue until death, it was Shin’s duty to accept his challenge.

For the role of the opponent who gives glory to the end of the first Beast King, there was no person that fit the role better than Shin.

“…I understand. I accept your challenge.”

He looked back into Girard’s eyes and agreed.

There were no grim emotions in the eyes of these two people.

As if it was expected to happen in the near future, such a sensation was shared.

“…………”

As the two resolved themselves to face each other, Schnee was quietly watching them.

To Girard, who had revealed all his feelings, she felt it was enviable.

“By the way, have you talked about your decision to Wolfgang, Van, and Rajim?”

Girard’s existence as the first Beast King was huge. If he died, then the influence his death would have on the surroundings was immeasurable.

“I have told them about my shortening life span, but not yet about the duel. Nonetheless, I have no intentions of concealing it. I will talk to them after this. Well, Van and Rajim seem to be aware of my wish though.”

Saying his confidants’ names, Girard laughed.

They probably pretended not to see through and so on; it seemed like they had really followed Girard for a long time.

“Are they your fellow comrades-in-arms?”

“Yes, after Shin disappeared, it was a relationship built on continuously fighting together.”

Girard probably felt nostalgic for the old days, as he talked while at the same time being boastful in some respects.

“Elephant and turtle. There are one or two kinds amongst the Beasts with long lives, huh? I guess it’s possible to live for more than 500 years.”

“You might say that I’m the one who is an old geezer. They were originally in a guild somewhere, but it collapsed during the ‘Dusk of the Majesty’.”

When Girard first met them, both of them were still boys. They became his subordinates with whom he shared his life; it could be said they were comrades.

“Those guys have years of experience. I am also similar. Soon, the people of this country have to get out from our influence.”

Different from when Girard boasted about his subordinates, he closed his eyes like he was worried about something.

“We beasts quickly go through our generations. Though it’s not what I should say myself, our existence has grown too big due to that. I got off as a retired person until about the second or third generation, but I became the shadow who was being relied upon after that. Other than the current Beast King, we were being counted on by the guys before that.”

“That is certainly bad.”

It was a problem if the strongest king was still active during each successive generation. The stories would be slightly different though if his ability declined. However, whether it was for better or for worse, Girard’s physical strength hardly changed as time passed. When his bad influence showed traces on the current reign because of it, Girard was probably in a bind. Looking at his character, one wouldn’t expect him to be involved in politics. However, his influence would remain, simply because he was part of the first generation.

“I’m not saying that I want to die just to pass over my lifespan. But the country is still not good. Though I cannot strongly say that because there are the chosen ones, if I only depend on a few strong warriors, I don’t know what would happen if those guys died. If Shin hadn’t come, I thought of going away to a far-off land.”

It was not necessarily a bad thing to be gathered up and lead by a strong person. But, Girard’s strength, compared to the other chosen ones, was too different in order of magnitude, so it was not possible to treat them as if they were of the same rank.

“I heard that Wolfgang is excellent as a ruler, what about that?”

“Indeed, that guy is especially excellent among the successor generations. Even in battle he is the strongest, next to me, within Falnido. He also listens to the voice of the people.”

The present Beast King seemed to be stronger than Van and Rajim.

“So you can leave it to him, right?”

“That’s so.”

This was a someone with whom he was able to entrust the country. It was a very joyous thing for the people who supported Wolfgang to shoulder the country. Moreover, Girard was also able to die without worry for the only country he created.

“Come to think of it, I heard that Wolfgang and Cuore are not Chosen Ones, why was that?”

“Those fellows are certainly not chosen ones. However, that’s what people say. If I am to judge from their stats, they are more than 600 on average.”

The value that Girard conveyed greatly exceeded the ability level of a chosen one by many times over, even more than Shin expected. Apparently, powerful people in this world didn’t seem to be limited to only the chosen ones.

“Even if I say that, they are more like the exception. Within my direct descendants, a child who can succeed my ability would occasionally be born. Wolfgang and Cuore are two of them. There are individual differences regarding how much those children inherit, but generally, their attribute values are high.”

“In the case of a chosen one, such a thing never happens?”

“I’ve never heard of such a story. But such cases, where one has stats above the standard, I have heard rumors about them. At least, they never went out of the stage from being rumors to facts.”

Girard highlighted a portion of the rumor. Though he didn't confirm it, since it happened to a child's body, he couldn't be so sure.

"Actually, though it is a rarity among the chosen ones, a person with abilities greater than Wolfgang might have been born."

Once again, a very powerful chosen one seemed to have appeared.

According to Girard, he was informed that each of the stats had an average of 700. It was a value than could even fight with Kagerou. It was said that there was no information relating to their descendants.

By the way, as Shin expected for an ordinary chosen one, if one of their stats, STR or INT or so on, reached 500, they seemed to be classified in the upper advanced level. It seemed to be quite rare for two of the stats to be that high.

The two princesses of Bayreuth seemed to fall under that category, but there were hardly any others. Furthermore, their stats were around 200-300 higher than the standard. This numerical value could be gauged from intuition when fighting. As for the majority of the chosen ones, they had an average of 350 at most.

"Still, it's plenty menacing for a commoner, huh?"

"It seems so. Well, the story has digressed. Let's return to the talk about our duel."

Girard lightly shook his head.

"Okay, on that subject, do you know of a good place with plenty of room for the duel? If we fight seriously, it won't end up as just a joke."

As Shin said, the surroundings would definitely be turned into empty plot of land with a destroyed surface. According to the circumstances, it was necessary to take the terrain changes into consideration.

Of course, no buildings, including the arena and training grounds, either. When Shin and Girard's attacks clashed, it would be too dangerous to even just watch.

"There is a place I have in mind. If you came from Beirun, do you remember Larua Grand Forest? Let's do it there."

"Is there a place to fight there? It's looked like a jungle to me though."

"That forest is a little special. Within a certain range in the extended forest, no matter how many trees are cut down, they will all be restored overnight. Because there were times when I tried to rampage before, even after I turned the roots upside down, it was completely restored the next day."

"What's with that…"

"It's a jungle-type dungeon that mutated. Though the cause is unknown, because the forest didn't extend from its fixed range, it was left alone. It was also used as a place for a fellow chosen one to fight, so it's not the first time."

"I see."

Shin, who at first might have been worried about the destruction inflicted upon nature, understood when hearing Girard's words. If it was restored no matter how much damage it took, it was perfect as a battleground. Moreover, if it's constantly being used as a ring, he didn't need to hesitate.

If the two people got serious, even if there were monsters that wandered around the area, they wouldn't become a threat either. It was just perfect.

"Then there's no problem about the location. Next is the time. I guess you don't have much time left?"

"It would the best for me to have it one week from now."

"Shouldn't it be better to have it earlier?"

"No, most of my power is likely to come forth on that day. The embers that are fading will burst into flames during my final moments; there is timing, you know?"

What he said was probably that his physical condition was also having its ups and downs. Was it because he sensed death? He seemed to understand about these types of things to an extent.

"Is that so? Then in the meantime, I will polish off your personal weapon. If we do this, you should have the best equipment."

"That is unnecessary. Still, I want to use that in my fight till the end."

Girard's personal weapon was an arm guard, covering everything from the hand to the elbow, 『Crushing Moon』. Its rank was of course, 《Ancient》 grade. It was firmly kept in Shin's Item Box.

Because 『Blue Moon』 was already returned to Schnee, the equipments he had remaining for his support characters numbered only three.

"How about your armor? I think you kept it with you before though."

"It's securely stored. Though its appearance is a bit rough, it was never in poor shape. Even after 500 years of using it, somehow I don't feel like its performance has dropped."

"Can I see it just in case, I have a feeling that no one could repair it?"

"Yes, none of them have the sufficient skill level. If it wasn't an 《Ancient》 grade with an outstanding durability level, it would've probably become useless by now."

For Girard, since the armor was not close to a keikogi*, it could be said that he had no way of maintaining it. He couldn't improve it by only using magic power. As Girard said, if this was a 《Mythology》 grade, it was likely that the armor would be useless. Its performance too, was the highest class in respect of the durability level in 《Ancient》 grade gear. *(T/N: Martial art uniform)

"I will hand over the armor first—— here it is."

"Okay, I'll keep it…this is horrible."

When Girard took out the armor, which was in Item Card form, from his Item Box, Shin lightly checked on the armor's condition and raised his voice as he was astounded. The reason was that the durability level of Girard's personal armor was left with only 30%.

To exhaust the durability of an《Ancient》 grade armor until it's this low, it was difficult even in the game. Exactly as Girard stated though, there was hardly any change in its defensive power, regardless of the degree of damage its durability suffered; it was as one expected from an 《Ancient》 grade item.

When he materialized it in an attempt to take a look, no other words came into his mind, except for 'worn-out'. There were torn spots, burns, and even discolored places, to which he couldn't help but want to say; ‘What have you done to this thing all this time?’

However——.

“When it comes to fight after fight for more than 500 years, I must say, you have cared for it well.”

When Shin thought about the times when the armor was repeatedly worn, he understood.

“The performance state hasn’t changed much either. It’s still usable.”

“Though it’s not something I should say myself, I have made an incredible thing.”

“Oioi, is that what the maker should say?”

Though what Girard said was reasonable, having touched the real thing and not data, Shin was made to wonder, ‘Was there such a thing?’. As for the one who was familiar with modern science, he believed that just this one could cause a technological revolution.

“…Well, that’s fine.”

Shin stopped thinking about these matters. If he returned to his former world, magic, skills, and so forth didn’t exist, even if it was possible, he didn’t intend to take something with him from this world.

“For the time being, leave the equipment to me. Is there anything else to decide upon?”

Returning back to the point of the discussion, Shin asked Girard. Assuming the battleground and equipment didn’t have any problems, the arrangement and succession were needed. Whether Shin could help it or not, he intended to lend his hand if there was anything he could do.

“Another thing huh?…I have nothing in particular. Because I’m not in some official position, there is no troublesome succession either. The preparations have already ended, too. Ah, that’s right. I want Wolfgang, Cuore, Van and Rajim, the four of them to watch the fight, do you mind?”

“Oh, that’s no problem. They already know that I’m a High Human, so I guess they want to watch from the side, too.”

“As for me, what kind of level of power a High Human has, I want to know that. The residents of this world, they don’t know of the existence that is stronger than me and the others. Of course I know there are monsters that are stronger than us, but if you find yourself representing a country, you will have a better understanding from the highest standpoint.”

Girard probably wanted to personally experience what it was like to go up against an opponent that one must not fight. The stories of Shin and the others’ strength were exaggerated like a fairy tale. He couldn’t comprehend that, unless he experienced it with his own body.

“Indeed. Certainly, the things before the ‘Dusk of the Majesty’ would be unknown if there were no long-lived species.”

“It’s not often that we fight seriously either, so they will be using 【Far Sight】 to watch us fight. I guess that is enough to feel the atmosphere of the battle.”

Though Shin intended to push the issue if Girard said they would be watching from within the vicinity, but as expected, Girard didn’t say it.

All jokes aside, the distance should be a kemel(km) at the minimum, or there would be casualties in the aftermath of the battle. Such a thing would result from the fight between Shin and Girard.

Whether or not they could defend themselves, they couldn't watch safely unless they were in a remote place, away from the battle.

"Such a place must be decided upon soon. And the rest will be decided after I tell Wolfgang and the others."

"Roger that. Then, is that all for today?"

"Uh huh. Ah, Schnee. Sorry, but can you take the teacups to the kitchen?"

"Yes, no problem."

Schnee put the teacups for 3 people on the tray, and left without making a sound.

"…So? What is it that you don't want Schnee to hear?"

After Schnee's figure disappeared for a few moments, Shin asked Girard. Because it was somewhat quite forced, Schnee probably also noticed it.

"Well, sorry for this."

He seemed to be sorry for what he did, Girard scratched his cheek.

"Only one, I want to confirm one thing."

Those eyes, they were more serious than when Girard talked about dueling with Shin. The opposite side, Shin, also naturally got nervous.

“Schnee might have already asked you this, but if Shin finds a way to return, will you?”

Will you leave Schnee behind?

Though that wasn’t expressed in words, it was clearly conveyed by Girard’s eyes.

“…….Yeah, I will return. That is the reason I continue fighting.”

He has family waiting. Has friends. Has companions.

There was no end, even though he cleared the game. It was the promise he had exchanged with his special someone to continue living in future, it was an oath that Shin himself decided upon.

Just because he was transported to another world, it would not make him quietly abandon hope and give up so easily.

“…Is that so?”

Shin’s answer was heard, and though Girard was about to say something for a moment, he didn’t turn it into words.

“Sorry.”

“No, it should be me apologizing. I’m sure the person concerned would understand. This old man tends to say unnecessary things.”

Girard shook his head, as it wasn’t his intention to say it expressly. Even Shin understood the things Girard wanted to say. No matter how large an effort Girard was making for the country, his fellow support character had been exchanging information with him, and they would notice each other’s intentions.

Schnee's situation from Tiera's story, and guessing from Girard's way of speaking, Schnee must have searched for Shin for a long time.

Would he return and leave her? Girard wanted to ask him, no, he was going to ask him. Girard, as a companion who had seen Schnee's actions, couldn't help but do so.

"We have our own, and Shin has his circumstances. They're difficult ones, too."

Girard sighed after he said so. He didn't express his words clearly, because he saw various colors in Shin's eyes. Doubt, confusion, and sadness were all reflected in there. There were also positive colors such as joy and love. And then, the color of determination enveloping them.

Girard knew those well, it was the color of a warrior who advanced while struggling. When he saw it, he understood that Shin was thinking about Schnee. In fact, he could assert about that.

However, a clear answer had not come out yet. In the answer that Girard heard, there was still some hesitation. His former world or the current world. Even though Shin still strongly thought about his former world right now, one never knew what would happen in the future.

"My matter and Schnee's matter too, I will think about them when I have gathered all the possible solutions, isn't that the smartest way of doing it?"

"Well, I too just thought about it a little while ago. It's as they say, the principle of convenience."

"Indeed, everything goes well and you get a good ending. Everyone is happy and they all lived happily ever after."

The ending where everyone laughs, no one is missing, and an overflow of happiness comes to him. For the misfortune that befell him, he would have no choice but to play a minor role that emphasized happiness.

“Really, I can’t relate to it at all.”

“That was just said unintentionally. But I also have the same opinion.”

He couldn’t help but think that to believe in both at the same time wasn’t possible. The two people, who experienced a lot of unjust separations, smiled wryly together.

“I’m sorry to take so much of your time, Shin. There’s still a little time before the meal. Get some rest.”

“I’ll do that.”

They bid farewell to each other and returned to their respective rooms. Shin killed time in the room while playing with Yuzuha. He wanted to begin the restoration of Girard’s weapon and armor, but the currently available time was insufficient.

Then he ate with relish over the luxurious dishes at dinner, and took a bath to wash off his sweat. There was no big event afterward either, the night of the first day in Falnido grew silent.

◆◆◆◆

After dinner, when Shin and his group were heading to their bedrooms, Van, Rajim, Wolfgang, and Cuore; the four of them were called to Girard’s private room.

“Ou, sorry to call you when all of you are tired.”

“What is it that you want to discuss together?”

Wolfgang, who might have felt there was something abnormal from Girard’s appearance, asked on behalf of the four people.

“Well, you see, I have found a place to die. And I wanted to tell you all.”

Out of nowhere, Girard said so with a light tone. Of course, the contents were far from being light-hearted.

“……Hah?”

To the sudden remark, Wolfgang’s response escaped from his mind. It was natural. Being suddenly told that a place to die was found, there was no way he could return with “Yes, I see”.

“What do you mean by that?”

“It is how it sounds. Didn’t I tell you all that my life-span was about to end? Before that, I will duel with Shin. That is the place I’m going to die at.”

“Why, now?”

“It is one week from now that I can display my maximum power. If I go beyond that, there is nothing left but to become decrepit and ugly with age afterwards. My warrior’s pride wouldn’t allow it if I didn’t bring it to an end before then.”

He dies as a warrior in the end. Wolfgang could say nothing to Girard who announced it so. After having done everything, protecting his family, leaving behind a child, he was ending his life in a fight without leaving any regrets.

For the wolfman clan warrior's family, which was also called Wolf Type, it was the best way to die. Much more so, if the opponent was of the legendary race, High Human. It would be envied by everyone.

"I'm going to say that the time has come."

In place of the silenced Wolfgang, Rajim muttered as he consented.

"Umu, when I heard the story of the longevity of the king, I never thought that it would end this way. What a way to go, huh?"

Followed by Rajim's words, Van also agreed while expressing his feelings. Wolfgang had no grim feelings here, which made him feel a little relieved.

"Why are you all so calm?"

The one who raised such a question to the 2 people was Cuore. She was losing her composure as she couldn't maintain her usual, formal tone.

"Princess, to die in a final fight against a High Human, there is nothing more honorable than this. As the king's direct descendant, shouldn't you already understand this?"

"I GET IT! I get it, but I can't calm down like Van at all."

To Van, who explained it to her in an admonishing way, Cuore, who was confused, rebutted. Even if she understood, it was not possible for her to consent.

Cuore could not imagine for that familiar power she felt, for Girard to die so easily.

"Cuore"

“...Yes.”

“You glorify me a little too much.”

“Such a thing is——”

“Aren’t you going to say no?”

Girard, who talked to Cuore with dignity, erased the light mood from a while ago. Still, somewhere in that figure, it was like a grandfather loving his grandchild, as it was reflected in the eyes of the three people who were watching.

“I have lived for a long time. My brothers have fallen, my son has died, and I have even nursed the grandchild he left. Why me, why didn’t I die? It’s reached the point where I often think of that. And the answer will come in one week.”

“…………”

“ Cuore, the time when I decided to see off Shin, who is my master, that is the only regret I have.”

“I see….”

“And, there is no match like one against Shin, even if I wish for it.”

“...Yes.”

Without even a trace of tragic feelings in Girard’s words, his determination to fight calmly fired up. Everyone in the room could feel that heat. No one could make it stop. As a first class warrior, everyone understood it. Stopping him would be an insult instead.

Cuore, who revealed her feelings too, now couldn’t do anything but agree.

“The place will be Larua Grand Woods. I will make it my last and greatest fight. Watch closely!”

“Yes!!”

The last order of the first Beast King.

The confidants and the direct descendants, all in a unified voice, accepted it.

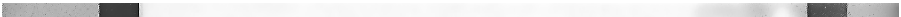
Chapter 3 Part 1

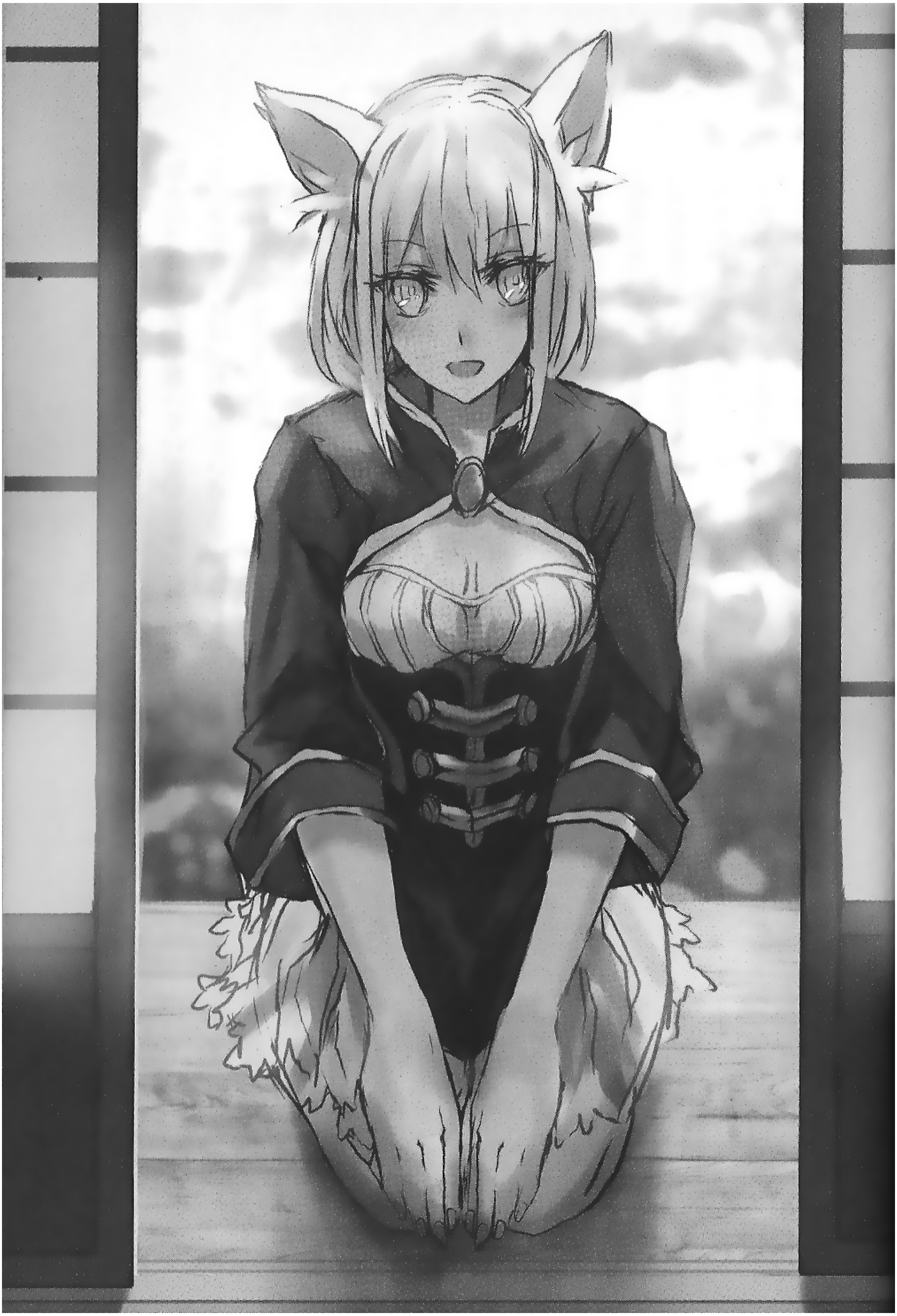
“Shin-dono! I’ve come to pick you up!”

“Hmm?”

The next morning. When Shin and Yuzuha were getting ready to dress themselves, a voice came from outside the room.

Shin opened the door while thinking, “Where have I heard that voice before?”. It was Cuore, kneeling in a proper seiza posture.





“Breakfast is ready. Come this way, please!”

“Ah, yes. Thank you.”

Since she didn’t talk much at the dinner table, he didn’t know it was her, with only her voice. Also, because it was not a maid, but Cuore, what kind of thing was that?

“Um, why is Cuore the one who is summoning me? Yesterday, I was told by the maid about dinner.”

Supposedly, Shin was a guest of Wolfgang, so the maid came to pick him up at dinner time.

“I asked to take over.”

Why would she do that? Shin thought, while thinking back that he had the same feeling at yesterday’s dinner. Within Cuore, the existence of High Humans was quite glorified, especially Shin’s, for some reason. Though she didn’t talk much, her manner and gaze showed eloquence toward Shin, too.

It was also probably because Shin was Girard’s master. Apparently there were too many anecdotes that were told when she was a child, so she seemed to feel strong admiration.

From Shin’s point of view, his embarrassing past being dramatized was nothing but a punishment game(batsu game) to him.

(I somewhat feel like her image of me is too far away from reality.)

Furthermore, the Cuore of today, her tension felt higher than yesterday. Shin became a little worried about that.

Did Girard tell her about the duel? It seemed to have slightly forced her tension to raise a little.

When he checked the route they were walking, while thinking about what was up with her, he noticed that they were going to a different place from the dinner.

“Isn’t the destination different from yesterday’s hall?”

“Yes, I was told to guide you to Girard-sama’s private room.”

Since the dinner was a banquet feast, he wondered if he could eat peacefully in the morning. On the account of the work, Cuore seemed to finish it earlier.

“It’s here. I think your companions will come soon. Then, I will be on my way.”

“Thank you.”

Shin thanked Cuore who was leaving with a bow, and entered the room. Inside were Girard, Van and Rajim.

Schnee and Tiera entered after a few minutes.

“Then, let’s eat.”

They finished greeting each other and began to eat breakfast. There was rice, miso soup, grilled fish and pickled vegetables when he looked at the contents of the menu.

When breakfast was over, they talked about things from then onward.

“Though I asked you to take care of the equipment, I don’t want you to only do that. You have to take it easy and go sightseeing.”

“Then, will you tell me a place with a library? A place with past documents is good, too.”

“Hmm, understood. There will be a need for a permission, but I will arrange it all.”

“I’m relieved of the trouble.”

He might identify some of the things he didn’t understand in Bayreuth. If there was the permission of the first Beast King, he might even be able to see something like a prohibited book which was his goal earlier. There were no issues somehow or other.

“What will Schnee and Tiera do?”

“I will stay with Shin.”

Schnee answered immediately as if it was natural. To take it easy? It seemed there was no option for her to go sightseeing.

“Well um, I wonder if I can follow you to the library too? I am curious but…”

“Do you want to go together after I repair Girard’s equipment?”

“I don’t mind. When you repair the equipment, will you deal with an 《Ancient》 grade weapon? I’m interested in that, too.”

Tiera had been researching the message card he handed over from before, but apart from that, she appeared to be interested in the work that Shin did.

Her study couldn't crack a part of the mechanism yet, but because she was not in a hurry, it seemed to be postponed.

“Then it’s settled. Girard and company, what will you do?”

"I am, well as they say, putting my affairs in order. While I'm at it, I intend to teach a skill that I failed before to Wolfgang."

"From yesterday's talk, did you reach the Hiden rank?"

"I've almost mastered it up until the Okuden. Because the Secret Book is almost certainly a loss. What will happen next will depend on that."

Because Shin had heard the story about their stats, he expected that a rank of martial art skills has been acquired.

The ranks in martial art skills were divided into 5 ranks in THE NEW GATE.

First, the foundation skill was Shoden. There were many techniques to learn by leveling up. Okuden could be attained by training Shoden and Chuden. When a special quest was completed, Hiden was usually acquired by taking a different action. And then, when everything from Shoden to Hiden skills were forged until they were at their greatest, Shiden could be learned.

(T/N: Shoden[Beginner] < Chuden[Intermediate] < Okuden[Hidden] < Hiden[Secret] < Shiden)

Because there were stat value requirements too, any player who attained Shiden was an advanced level player. Wolfgang's stats were barely enough for a Hiden rank.

Though Shin understood all of that, Girard's next words made him raise his eyebrows.

"Is there such a thing as the Secret Book failing?"

Shin was surprised at that information, as it shouldn't have failed if the condition was met. Was there another factor that has emerged or something? He thought it over.

“Martial arts and magic. Both depend on the mental condition of the user. Long story short, it can’t be learned if he is mentally inexperienced even if his stats are high.”

“…I see. It requires both mental and physical strength, huh?”

It was natural for martial arts, Shin who was thinking of various things, felt silly. As he himself belonged to an archery club in high school, he didn’t remember any sense of discomfort either. Martial arts were such things.

Mind and body were strengthened, to polish the techniques. It was a natural duty for a person to learn combat techniques.

“It’s that kind of thing. Well, if it’s Wolfgang, I don’t have to worry.”

“Certainly, he seemed to be diligent. And he has a warrior’s vibe as well.”

Shin had never met a person who was a genuine master or a person who was called a warrior in his former world, but he still felt integrity from Wolfgang. That sign would not be worn, if he had an untrained mind or inexperienced heart.

“He is pretty much my valued descendant. I’m so happy to have heard you say so.”

“You have become a grandpa who is proud of his grandchild, haven’t you? Well, the meal is finished, so I will start preparing. I want to take out Tsuki no Hokora, is there an open place somewhere?”

"There is a plaza for training. If it's there, it will be fine. Van, guide them, Rajim, go ask for the permit. I will go to Wolfgang's place."

""Roger!!""

Van would guide the three of them, Shin, Schnee, and Tiera, towards the plaza behind the residence. By the way, Yuzuha was on top of Shin's head, and Kagerou was walking with small steps by Tiera's feet.

"Step back just a little."

Van stepped back, and Shin took off the necklace with the crescent moon shape. And then, at the same time he threw it out to the plaza, he said the keyword.

"『Release』!!"

The necklace emitted light instantly. The light with the shape of the necklace was greatly expanded in the next moment, and took the form of a house. And when the light disappeared, Tsuki no Hokora appeared there.

"Hmm, this is the technique that only the store owner can use, huh? There's a big difference from hearing and seeing it."

Van, who saw it for the first time, seemed to feel some admiration as he looked at the state of Tsuki no Hokora. Tiera, who had surely seen Tsuki no Hokora be put away before, had her face stiffen at that absurdity again. As usual, only Schnee didn't show any reaction at all.

"Let's enter now. What will Van do?"

"If it is possible, I would like to see the process of repairing the armor. Such an opportunity, there will be no next time."

“Okay. I don’t usually show it, but if it’s Girard’s aide, I guess it’s fine. Come on, follow me.”

Shin spoke and entered Tsuki no Hokora. They passed through the counter, and went straight to the blacksmith’s workshop. Other members also followed for some reason.

“Somehow, it feels like a tour.”

“I agree. Being able to see the technique of a person who has mastered blacksmithing, that possibly nobody will ever see again? Anyone would want to see it.”

“Kuu, it’s interesting to watch.”

“Guru”

Following Tiera’s remark, Yuzuha and Kagerou raised their voices too. When Yuzuha spoke, Van had the look that seemed to want to say “Eh…?”, but never did. Incidentally, Shin recalled when Yuzuha couldn’t speak.

It was possible for Yuzuha to talk, unlike an ordinary monster, because it was an Element Tail; Van was forcibly convinced, and Shin started working.

The divine beast was also there, but without Van, who consented pursuing it in particular, he looked closely at Shin’s work.

“First, from how I understand its current condition”

By materializing the card, he held the armor in both of his hands. When Shin’s mana ran through it, the armor itself began to shine in seven colors. From that, Shin listed the missing things in his brain.

"…this can only be done with Orichalcum."

After confirming his list, Shin separated one hand from the armor and manipulated the Item Box. Though the armor was held with only his left hand, with it still shining, it was maintained in the air like the time he held it with both hands.

Shin took out the missing material, and materialized it. A transparent lump of metal like a crystal appeared, it was the Orichalcum. When Shin held his right hand out toward it and performed some movement, the Orichalcum came apart at the edges, and changed into a fine thread.

"That skill…indeed, no one could learn that."

Van muttered, unable to describe the mysterious phenomenon before him. Van was a character originally made to have the role of a blacksmith during the game era. Therefore, he has the capability of a common blacksmith. That was why he was able to understand, more than everyone currently present, the abnormality that happened right in front of him.

The spectacle where the Orichalcum transformed its shape voluntarily, he couldn't do anything but keep looking at in utter amazement.

"The torn part is repaired. The Orichalcum is diffusing thoroughly and the strength is recovered. Mana is mixing evenly————"

Was what Shin said, as he was concentrating on his work so much that he didn't notice the state of Van and the others. It was only natural. What Shin had in his hand now, so to speak, was Girard's burial clothes. He couldn't afford to pay attention to the surroundings, because he had to keep working with the utmost respect. As for the reason he allowed their observation, other than the reason that they would not interfere, it was because he had a hunch that there was no room for him to mind.

All of the nerves in his body concentrated to restore the armor to the best possible condition. That was the thing that Shin must do.

At about 30 minutes. When the seven colors of lights disappeared, the dougi type armor reached the point where one would hesitate to touch it. It was unimaginable that its appearance was once battered.

“Phew, it’s done.”

Shin wiped the sweat that slightly drifted away, and changed the armor back into a card. The work that ended after several minutes in the game, it actually felt very time consuming for the one who did it.

Generally, it took more time to finish since his magic manipulation wasn’t perfect yet, although it was understood that he could do it by intuition. Even so, the area around precision rose up greatly when he used mana the same way of using magic skills; it was as one would expect from a person who mastered blacksmithing.

To restore such a flexible equipment like the dougi of 《Ancient》 grade, this method was the most efficient. There were other methods too, but they were inferior in terms of performance.

“Hey Shin. Earlier, was that blacksmithing? It seemed to be a magic skill to me.”

“Indeed, it certainly looks like that when seen by others. However, if there is no smithing skill covering it, let alone to change the metal’s shape, it would become a quality that is lower than scrap iron in an instant.”

Shin didn’t know the requirements before either, so he himself experienced Orichalcum and Mithril changing into scrap iron. The rare metal which he had gathered through much hardship, when it crumbled right in front of his eyes, it was heart breaking, even to Shin.

“…What?”

“I understand that the mana seems to change the quality.”

Such a thing should have been written on the explanation column of the skill, so Shin then opened the explanation column of the skill he used a moment ago to confirm. <When manipulating the mana, if there is a power fluctuation outside of the material’s quality, it will result in the lowest quality for metal.>

“By the way, the skill level must be sufficient too, or the same thing will happen while repairing.”

“Don’t tell me, you did an experiment on the substance?”

“…There were times when I would repair armor made of Orichalcum and made a mistake, it become an armor of scrap iron.”

Recalling those days, Shin’s mood became deeply emotive as he brooded over that time. Tiera who heard the story, had complicated feelings.

“Blacksmithing is surprisingly a job with a big risk.”

Tiera calculated the monetary damage of when Orichalcum became scrap iron. Since she was dealing with goods in Tsuki no Hokora, she knew the market price to some extent, but for the amount of Orichalcum needed to make an armor and so on, she couldn’t imagine how much it cost to only collect it. Tiera didn’t want to think that there was a job that turned it into worthless scrap metal in an instant.

“Usually it returns to an ingot even if I make a mistake, and other items can be processed to be reuseable. Just this, let alone reusing it, I’m worried because it can become complete garbage.”

If Shin failed normally with blacksmithing, there were several methods to reuse a material. Of course the item would not just return to its original form without any changes, but it’s still better than nothing. However, the method Shin used before couldn’t be reused now, no matter what. The purchase price was zero if sold to an NPC in the game.

To rise a skill level, just how many rare metals did he convert into garbage? If it was not a game, it was something he wouldn’t have been able to do by any means.

“The reason for the loss is not only because of the craftsman’s ability. To use Orichalcum for practice would be an unbelievable act for the present blacksmiths.”

“That’s right. How much does Orichalcum cost now?”

“In Falnido, it will be a white gold for a fist-sized ingot. Though only a few people can deal in it, it is obvious that everyone would be in a frenzy if the price was knocked down. It’s difficult to ascertain how many times its value has increased.”

“It’s amazing after all.”

How much would it cost if Shin seriously made a sword from it? There were various rare metals in his Item Box, it seemed like he couldn’t show it to the other blacksmith.

“I will stop selling metals then. Well, the story has gone this far, should I move on to the next one?”

Shin then took out Girard’s personal weapon, 『Crushing Moon』.

Since this weapon was at an even higher ranking than the armor, there was only a little damage on the surface of the arm guard. The durability level also had more than 90% remaining.

He needed to restore this to be completely perfect. This time he put the 『Crushing Moon』 on top of the table, in addition, a small ingot was put on top of it.

“What is that…”

“By chance, is that the…”

Tiera and Van saw the ingot, but only hoarse voices leaked out. The ingot, which was put on top of the 『Crushing Moon』, with Schnee as the exception, no one in that place had ever seen it before.

The metal had a dull shine for a black color. However, on the main colored surface, big and small glitters were able to be perceived. It was like the night sky where the stars sparkled for as far as you can see, or like the space containing numerous galaxies.

Tiera, who was sensitive to magic, understood that the metal contained extraordinary magic power, and was astonished. She consistently saw metal that had magic power contained in them many times before, but the metal in front of her was far more superior. She thought it was possible for it to be a magic catalyst as it was.

Van, who knew a lot about metals, had its identity flash in his head. It was different from any of the Orichalcum, Adamantine, Mythril, or

Crimson Ores, but it felt higher ranked compared to the above mentioned metals. Suddenly one thing came to his mind. It was called an illusion among the blacksmiths, because no one could say they had seen the real thing.

“Bang!!”

Despite the two people being shocked, before they knew it, Shin took out a hammer and struck the ingot on top of 『Crushing Moon』. With a high-pitched sound “Kin”, the two people were fascinated to see the phenomenon that happened earlier following up again.

When Shin beat the ingot with the hammer, the ingot melted and faded away. And the scratch under the 『Crushing Moon』 disappeared, it began to shine brightly as if to say it was completed.

The hammer was swung downward a few times to completely fuse the ingot, 『Crushing Moon』 looked like a brand new gauntlet on the table.

“Yosh, this one is complete too. It is perfect if I say so myself.”

While looking at 『Crushing Moon』 which had returned to its perfect state, Shin nodded and agreed. If it was this, there was a confidence of satisfying any kind of demand from the user.

Because he couldn’t look at it forever, he formed it into a card and put it away in his Item Box. “Sorry to have kept you waiting” Shin said and turned around, and saw that Tiera and Van had indescribable expressions on their faces.

Schnee had no change in particular, Yuzuha and Kagerou seemed to be excited for the time being. They were having some kind of conversation with “Kuu Kuu”, “Guru Guru” sounds.

“Shin-dono. May I ask you one thing, only one?”

Among the two people who had frozen in shock, it was Van who began to move first. By bringing his face close, he urged Shin to consent with force. As one might expect from a beast of the elephant type, that power was considerable. Shin moved back a little.

“For the time being, please settle down, you will hear the story. You are close, too close!”

“Oof, I am sorry. But the metal that Shin-dono took out some time ago, that is, perhaps a Chimeradite ingot, the one thing that is of the highest grade?”

“Hmm? That’s right. But you seem to know it well. Because there are different types of Chimeradite, there are not many people who see it and recognize it instantly.”

“It’s not because I understand it’s type. It is something like a legend, circulated among the blacksmiths. The dark-colored metal where it retains the twinkling of the stars. Chimeradite, A weapon made using it could easily kill even a higher kind of dragon. Depending on the person, such a thing was deemed a mere fantasy.”

“Indeed. This thing is certainly quite limited. It’s hardly circulated in the market.”

Even during the game era, for a high-level blacksmith, it was an item that they would almost never see. Even the ingot. Once, a retired player had put a weapon made of Chimeradite into the market on a whim, a fierce competition arose because of it.

It was virtually impossible to be fully equipped even for an advanced player. With only one of those, it was possible to become famous. Of course, it goes without saying that all of the Rokuten members were the irregularity that had all of their metal-based weapons made of Chimeradite.

“By the way, Shin. You were doing it differently a little while ago, is there any significance to it?”

After Shin made Van settle down, Tiera asked a question. If he had used the same method earlier to repair the armor, he should have been able to repair it without using the hammer.

“That 『Crushing Moon』 is a weapon which has the highest rank, that’s why. And both grades are 《Ancient》 grade. But, there is a rating higher than that. The armor is ranked as average 《Ancient》 grade. Because the metal is knitted together with thread using mana, that method was effective and fast. In regards to 『Crushing Moon』, it is a higher-rank of 《Ancient》 grade. When it comes to that, I need to directly hammer it while feeding it mana. Though it’s possible to mend it using the same method as the armor, this is more efficient, and above all, there is no possibility of making a mistake.”

Tiera knew there were differences between the same grade. However, she never thought that the grading was also applied; 《Ancient》 grade was even referred to as a fragment of the world, it was indeed the highest grade.

According to Shin’s explanation, based on the grade and the nature of the armor, there seemed to be a maintenance method that was the most suitable.. Though there were other methods, in that case, the possibility of changing the quality sharply rose. If it was done in a timely manner, with sufficient ability, it was almost impossible to make a mistake.

“I have to redo my thinking about a blacksmith that is out of their area of expertise. For such precise mana power manipulation, it won’t be possible without mage knowledge.”

“Magic manipulation is necessary anywhere, someway or another. In case of a production job, skill in magic manipulation is required as it gets closer to the advanced levels.”

“Alchemy however, is a thoroughly difficult study, too. Even though I learned a few skills, I can’t even call myself a full-fledged practitioner.”

Tiera had the skills which could be said to be the mark of a full-fledged alchemist, but from today, she realized that that was only one part of it, and she was aware that she wasn’t as good in that regard either. She couldn’t help but think that she might not even reach the middle of the pack in the era where Shin came from.

The field was totally different, but to see a person who reached the very pinnacle doing his work, Tiera felt something towards that person.

“You seem to be improving slowly. It’s not easy to gain skills either.”

Tiera’s shoulder was lightly tapped, and Shin faced the entrance of the forge. The things that needed to be done were over, so everyone decided to go towards the living room now.

When Shin and the others moved, he heard the sound of the store’s entrance being opened. It should be Rajim, when guessing from the timing.

“Shin-dono. This is the reading permit for the restriction area in the library. Please accept it.”

“Thank you. I’m saved.”

As he anticipated, the permit was received from Rajim, who entered the store. Because there was also no reason to remain, after everyone left, Tsuki no Hokora was stored again. They headed toward the library with Schnee as a guide. Van and Rajim returned to their residence as they couldn't be together all the time.

When they appeared from the back door of the residence to Elden's city district, Tiera was surprised at the diversity of the people walking.

There were many people in Bayreuth too, but almost all of them were humans. There were not many races with different characteristics, such as beasts or pixies.

However, this was the beasts' country. Beasts with various animal characteristics were walking and overflowing. There were types that walked on two feet with almost an appearance of animals in clothes, the type that had a tail and ears on their body, and so forth; there was no uniformity.

Even if it was the same as the great number of people in Bayreuth, she was even more surprised to see this many beasts here.

"I thought I got used to seeing beasts, but there are just so many different impressions as there are numbers of them."

"That's because the beast race is the one whose outward appearance is the most diverse."

In the game era, there were people whose bodies resembled a human, there were some who only had their face as animal combinations and the like. The degree of freedom in combinations was high, so the name of the beast was attached to it.

“Even for the people other than the beasts, there are items so you can feel what’s it’s like to be a beast too.”

What Schnee was saying was that there were items such as animal ears or tails which could be mounted and removed. A so-called cosplay item. The item was surprisingly popular among the female players. It was also the item for which the male players made a petition for the female players to wear.

“Speaking of which, I also have several of them.”

“By chance, it’s that!?”

Schnee pretended to reach into the pouch on her waist, and a card was taken out of her Item Box.

It was the cosplay item that Shin gave to Schnee before. When she materialized the item, it was adjusted to match Schnee’s hair; silver colored dog ears and a bushy tail were grasped in her hand.

It was an item created on a whim by the members of Rokuten before. Anyway, it was high quality with various options. It was not just an ordinary cosplay item.

“Amazing. Doesn’t this feel like a real one?”

“It was a Shin, Reed-sama, Cashmere-sama, and Hecate-sama collaboration. To bring it as close to the real thing, there is a function that automatically conceals the characteristics of other races when attached… how does it look?”

Schnee stated, and equipped the cosplay set. The long ears peculiar to elves disappeared in a moment,and instead there were dog ears on top of her head, and a tail of a similar color to her hair emerged from around the area of her tailbone. The beautiful High Elf woman, transformed into a beautiful High Beast woman.

By the way, what Schnee was wearing now was hotpants with boots under, and a light-blue shirt with nothing but a long jacket on top. Because the uniform of Tsuki no Hokora somehow stood out, her clothes were changed into an easy to move in adventure-like style.

A belt was worn near the lap on top of the jacket, and the pouch was attached there. In one of the equipments in the game age, the jacket was split into right and left from the belly area, so it wouldn’t obstruct the movement of the legs. Schnee left only one button in front of her belly, and all others remained open. There were two reasons. One, it wasn’t so cold as to close everything. Two, she couldn’t completely close it because of her chest measurement.

In the game’s specifications, be it armor or a dress, it would automatically adjust to the physique of the person who equipped it; one would not deliberately wear something without that feature. What Schnee was wearing, was the equipment previously created under supervision of one of the female members of Rokuten, Hecate. Not to mention its good performance, it was set-up to emphasize Schnee’s style. According to Hecate, it was erotic for a beautiful woman and young lady, like a cute outfit where a man would want to help her put it on too, was what she said.

Clothes that focused on seduction, when worn by a woman whose style was the embodiment of a man’s desire, such as Schnee, the effect level rose by at least one more step. In comparison to a thin waist tightened with a belt, the bulging of her chest pushed up due to the shirt in the jacket, but it would be emphasized too much.

Schnee, in such a state, blushed a little as she felt embarrassed, but still asked for an impression.

"…It suits you very well."

Anyways, in the game era, the NPC's only reacted like a doll. So when asked "How's it look?" by Schnee just now, Shin couldn't think of anything good to say except, she matched well. He wasn't used to seeing lively garments either, but the dog's ears suited her very well.

The moment Schnee heard those words, her face's rosy complexion flashed even pinker. At this point, one would have noticed her abrupt behavior.

"…E-Elves stand out, so disguising as a beast makes it easier to fit into the surroundings. Besides it's better like this now I will lead us to the library let's go."

While talking quickly, she stuttered to some extent and Schnee began to move at a quick pace. There was no breathing in the latter half of her speech.

Supposingly, the long ears, peculiar to elves, would have turned bright red. As for the dog's ears that were shaking on top of Schnee's head, they somewhat look red when seen by Shin and the others.

"I saw, for the first time, Master act like this."

"To be honest, me too."

He agreed with Tiera's remark while running after Schnee. As for the two people, it was better not to attract attention. So he took out some items, and Shin and Tiera changed their appearance to beasts, too. What Shin lent to Tiera were cat ears.

Could it be that Schnee wanted him to see, so she changed herself? Shin guessed while chasing the back of Schnee. Though it might just be him over thinking it, but if it proved to be right…it was already too late to think about it in various ways.

The Schnee whom Shin knew was a woman like a secretary, a calm, cool and collected woman. Because she always communicated in a businesslike manner during the game, he never saw this side of her like at this time. It seemed he needed to change his way of thinking.

(I think that's not so bad, mostly.)

While he was aware of his favorable impressions of Schnee rising, Shin quickened his pace in pursuit of her.

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It was several hours later, after seeing the unknown side of Schnee. Shin was alone in the library of Elden.

When he arrived at the library with Schnee's guidance, after he showed the permit and entered the restricted reading area, he proceeded to examine what happened after the 'Dusk of the Majesty'. Unlike Bayreuth, because the materials were not open to public, the content was different in quality. Some information that Shin wanted to know was recorded too.

"The natural disasters that occurred after the 'Dusk of the Majesty'…there's no difference in damage by the regions after all. Isn't the range of the last dungeon connected to the…Earth Pulse?"

Shin arranged the information he obtained, while voicing out in a small volume. According to the material, what was called Earth Pulse seemed to have been related with the natural disasters. Shin had heard it well in manga and light novels, it was something like a circle that ran through the earth. Though it was the guess of the person who compiled the document, the biggest place where the continents divided had numerous flows of the Earth Pulse. The dungeon that Shin faced at the end of the death game, 【Gate of the Otherworld】, that place was the convergence point, which could be read from the document.

“Come to think of it, Yuzuha interfered with the Earth Pulse and suppressed the damage, huh?”

Even if he said they had a contract, a monster was still prohibited from entering the area. So now, there was no figure of Yuzuha on top of Shin’s head. Under the watch of the young lady at the reception desk, while apologizing to Yuzuha, who was waiting at the entrance in his heart, he remembered the things Yuzuha said before.

“Is the Earth Pulse also related to me coming here? But at the time of the game, it was not a major thing.”

There was an event related to the Earth Pulse, but there were a lot of limited-time events that he couldn’t remember up until a trivial setting. The one he understood the most was that the place where the Earth Pulse ran, monsters were likely to appear. Even if he knew this, there was no conclusive evidence in this world.

However————

(As shown in the document, if the place where the Earth Pulse gathered(Power Spot) is related to the dungeon, it is possible for me to return if a similar place is found…right?)

Though it was only a plain hypothesis, it was simple and also persuasive.

It would save a lot of trouble if it was as simple as this. While thinking about these kind of things, Shin picked up the next document.

“(Shin~…Shin~?)”

“Hmm?”

One hour later.

Shin was concentrating on reading the documents, when he noticed the Mind Talk from Yuzuha.

“(What’s the matter?)”

“(I’m hungry…no lunch yet~?)”

When he confirmed the time due to Yuzuha’s meal remark, it was already past 12:00 in the afternoon. He seemed to have forgotten the time passing as he got absorbed in reading the documents.

“(My bad, I will go out immediately. Schnee, can you hear me?)”

“(Yes, is there something wrong?)”

“(Let’s have lunch soon. Yuzuha seems to be feeling hungry.)”

“(Understood. I will go toward the entrance.)”

Schnee was contacted with Mind Talk, and Shin left the restriction area a little early. He caught Tiera who was conducting research in the general area, and went toward the waiting Yuzuha and Kagerou. After thanking the receptionist who looked after them, Shin left the library after all the member joined.

“Did you find something?”

“No, not much of the important things. Still, it is regretful that the dungeon disappeared. If I could investigate it directly, I think I might able to get a little clue from there…

Well, there's nothing we can do since it's already gone. It's thanks to Schnee that I understood something, and it's going steadily."

While pretending not to worry about it, Shin thanked the discouraged Schnee. For the information that vanished afterward, it was not possible to know without Schnee.

Instead, Shin was more worried if they couldn't collaborate in information gathering together.

"(Kuu, smells good from there.)"

"(Hmm? It indeed smells nice. Let's go there.)"

Shin changed his feelings with Yuzuha's urging voice. Even if he was anxious, he decided not to say it yet.

After the meal, he looked around the residence a little, and then shut himself up in the library again.

He took a rest in the residence at night, and it was a repetition of the library in the daytime.

As a change of pace, he had a match with Cuore, and watched the skill succession of Wolfgang, so he was never bored.

When he went to Larua Grand Woods for a preliminary inspection, Tiera's leveling up also took place. With her level still low, she became completely dependent on Kagerou condition. Even if her upper limit was pretty much decided, Shin respected Tiera's intention of wanting to become strong, even if only by a little.

In the meantime, the remaining days passed in no time.

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One week later, Shin met Girard again. They moved toward Larua Grand Woods in the early morning.

Because they were in the wagon which Shin remodeled, it was Kagerou who pulled it. There were Shin, Girard, Schnee, Tiera, Wolfgang, Cuore, Van, Rajim and Yuzuha riding in the wagon.

"It's fine weather."

"It's the perfect weather for a duel."

Shin and Girard were sitting on the driver's box. Contrary to everyone who seemed a little tense, the two people had a conversation like they were going fishing. Since there was nothing that could be done about it, there were no things that needed to be discussed left. Everything had come to an agreement, including the things to be done after the duel.

"How is your condition?"

"I can do it anytime. My mind and body are joined together."

The broad grin and laugh from Girard, an irrepressible presence was leaking out. Shin felt that it was refined even more since the time they met again.

Girard certainly seemed to be at full power today.

“Though I want to begin immediately, let’s send the other people to the spectator seats.”

“I guess from that hill should be fine, right?”

“Indeed, if there I guess it will be fine. Last time when the chosen ones dueled, I watched it from up there.”

For a fight between the chosen ones of another country, Girard seemed to have been called upon as the role of referee. Though there were guards with low fighting power watching from the top of the hill, it seemed to be no problem if they saw that Girard was nearby, Shin thought.

It was the humans’ and beasts’ chosen ones that fought. Their stats were around 400, but the beast appeared to have won by a hair’s breadth.

“The usage of skill and power were rough, but the fight was not so bad.”

While they were talking, a place where the ground was several floors higher than its surroundings appeared in Shin’s field of vision. Only short grass grew there, and it seemed to be quite vast when they surveyed it on the top of the hill. Because Shin and Girard were to fight, it was impossible to know what would happen. It was certainly perfect as a spectating position, when he thought about the spectators’ safety.

“Then, we will wait here.”

“Ah, I will count on you if there are any stray shots.”

The wagon was returned to a card, and he asked Schnee for precautions just to make sure. He thought it would be fine, but it wouldn’t end as a joke if it did happen.

“I understand. And as for Girard’s matter, thank you in advance.”

“Well, see you soon.”

“Shin, go for it~”

“Guru”

“I’m going.”

Schnee, Tiera, Yuzuha and Kagerou saw Shin off, and faced toward Girard’s people. Shin glanced ahead, and saw every one of Falnido exchanging their last words.

“I will leave it to you two afterward.”

““I wish you good luck in battle!””

The things that should be told might have already been conveyed. So Girard only said a few words. Van and Rajim striked their left palm to their right fist, and said their farewell words.

“I will not forget the founder’s teaching throughout my life. As for the country and the people, leave it to me.”

Wolfgang declared that he would take responsibility for Falnido when Girard was no more. He announced it with confidence, sticking out his chest with pride. That expression had a close resemblance to Girard in the past. Powerful words, and oozing with presence, it was worthy of a Beast King.

"…I will become a warrior who won't shame the founder's name."

Cuore, who stood nearby, had little watery eyes, but still looked ahead and stated her oath firmly. She couldn't expose her unsightly side at Girard's final goodbye, so she didn't cast her eyes down.

Girard who saw her state nodded in satisfaction, and began to walk toward Shin's party.

The parting was finished. There was only one thing left to be done.

"Shall we go?"

"Ou."

Starting with those words, Shin and Girard began to run. With that sudden acceleration, the figure of the two people became blurry. They ran down the hill's slope in a flash without anything obstructing them, and entered the forest.

"The king hasn't laughed like that in a long time."

"When was the last time I saw him like that?"

As they saw the two people disappear into the forest, Van and Rajim exchanged a few words. That face, that was laughing innocently like a child, was similar to Girard's expression.

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Chapter 3 Part 2

Shin and Girard ran between the trees, they were headed straight towards the center of the forest. By the way, Larua Grand Woods was quite spacious. One could imagine the vastness, when it was said to be wider than Hokkaido in the real world.

They went towards the center to keep the damage to the surroundings to a minimum. To really ensure safety, they should be at least 20 kemels away from the spectators.

Wouldn’t it make so that they couldn’t be seen by the【Far Sight】 skill if they were that far away? It was probably a concern, but it would never happen. Because, on the route where Shin and Girard ran through, clouds of dust looking like explosions and thousands of sliced trees flying off could be seen. Even though their figures couldn’t be seen, that track of destruction informed the others of their existence.

The two people ran side by side for a while, and divided into two groups on the way. While heading toward the center, they gradually separated from each other. It was about 10 minutes later, that the earth and sand that was flying up due to their tracks disappeared, and so they knew that the two people stopped moving.

About 5 kemels apart, both of them faced each other. Among a few of the dueling methods of the beasts, it was the oldest dueling principle that was chosen this time.

With that settled, the duel that took place in Larua Grand Woods was where they set a distance according to the ability of the people who were fighting. This was intended to get rid of the handicap of each other’s weapon specialty.

Though it might seem to be disadvantageous for the short distance type, the dense trees that obstructed the view made it easy to dish out a surprise attack.

As for the long distance type, though the distance was reduced, that meant it was harder to make a line of fire with the trees in the way.

Now that it came to this, whoever found the opponent first, was the most important point. Normally the distance would be roughly 50 mels, but because it was these two's ability that were having showdown this time, what was said to be the best distance was not decided. Both of them spontaneously decided the distance.

There was also no referee for this match. Though it wasn't just because it would put the referee's body into danger; to begin with, victory or defeat was not significant between Shin and Girard. The fight itself was the goal. A referee, and the likes, would only be a hindrance instead.

Their fighting spirits were mutually raised at their locations, and they gazed at the opponent they couldn't see.

Shin had to control his 【Limit】, to match his stats with the time in the game. It wasn't because he was 'going easy on someone'. The titles, such as Limit Breaker and Accomplished One, were turned off in the fight, so it became the original values from when he had spent time with Girard.

Shin wore the titles that had increased his power from around the time of the Death Game. The titles that he acquired after he defeated the boss, Origin, in the final dungeon, would never have been obtained via normal play. Because the dungeon that was also called 【Gate of the Otherworld】, and Origin too, both appeared after the Death Game began. To fight against an opponent who called himself Master, it was extremely rude to depend on those cheat skills. Though there would certainly be a time when he must use it, at least now was not that time.

This was a kind of ceremony to see off Girard. It was meaningful, when fighting with only his own power.

Girard strengthened his own ability with the aid of martial arts skills. Shin’s stats were better than his, this was something he had known a long time ago. To fill the differences, even if only by a little, he wouldn’t spare the effort.

Though Shin talked about the titles with Girard, he also conveyed that he didn’t have any intentions of using them. About that, Girard was thankful, but regretful too. He would do the same thing if he was in Shin’s position; it was easy to imagine. The feeling of them getting in the way was understood, and he felt genuine happiness by thinking that it would be settled with only their own original powers. However at the same time, he really wanted to have a fight with Shin at his best, in the true sense. Girard also knew, that Shin also thought of the same thing. When that time happened though, it would be over in an instant.

Girard was lost in thought for a brief amount of time; To receive the death that he could be satisfied with the most.

Now at this moment, Shin and Girard were pouring every nerve into each other’s presence.

Thus, it was the moment that both of them were well prepared for. The presence of the opponent was felt, and it was understood that they were ready.

And then————.

““Suuuuu——————.””

The two people inhaled in a deep way. And like they had arranged it beforehand, skills were invoked.

““Oooooooooooooooooooooaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!””

What seemed to be like the firing of a signal gun for starting a war, was actually the barehanded system martial art skill, 【Cannon Wave】.

<Attract enemy’s attention, and cancel incantations of magic skills at a low probability.> As if sneering at such a skill’s explanation, both of them fired a【Cannon Wave】 that ran through Larua Grand Woods. Power that could rival even the upper class of wind-system magic skills mowed down a big tree exceeding 1 mel of diameter, blasted away a large monster on its course, and finally collided at the midpoint of the two people.

The charged energies did not offset each other, instead it condensed where it gathered, and that energy was released in all directions in the next moment. The scattering energy was transformed into a shock wave, and spread the destruction out to the surroundings.

That shock, together with the earth shaking, cleared the ground from a radial center that should be called ground zero. Big trees that were said to be several hundred years old, and the gigantic stones that were buried under them, flew over several mels up into the sky and disappeared into the thin air. Though it would cause a second disaster when they fell, the two people didn’t worry at all. After firing 【Cannon Wave】, they had already started moving.

If Shin used a magic skill for long distance, than Girard, who specialized in close-range was at a disadvantage. However, Shin abandoned the advantage of a one-sided attack from the distance, as he went toward Girard.

With the speed of the two people, it wouldn't take too long for them to arrive at the place where the 【Cannon Wave】 collided. The trees vanished and the ground was exposed, it was almost like an impromptu ring had appeared. Shin with his 『True Moon』 and Girard with his 『Crushing Moon』, took a stance and filled the distance furthermore.

"Shiiiiiiin!!"

"Giraaaaad!!"

Against the blow coming from over Shin's head, Girard answered by thrusting his right hand straightforward. Sparks and a buzz sound were produced when the weapons clashed.

With a high-pitched metallic sound, cracks ran through the ground around the position where the two people stood. The earth was split, due to the energy from the clash.

"Kuku, still as good as usual."

"Hah, this is nothing for me to stop the blow."

With a grinding sound, while praising each other as their weapons met, the grins that appeared on their faces could be called fierce.

The duel had become a state where they couldn't go easy on each other, because the higher the ability of both of them; just a trivial blow might prove fatal.

However, at this time now, Shin and Girard were both convinced that the other would not die from a lucky shot.

There was no reasoning there. They just knew.

————This guy(Girard) won't fall by such an attack!!

————I can't defeat this guy(Shin) with just this level!!

The weapons were repelled and they took some distance again.

Shin took a stance with his katana, and waited for Girard. Those fangs, if only he could pierce through them.

Girard, who prepared his stance with one leg bent in front and the other extending behind him, calmly overflowed with fighting spirit. As long as he used his own technique, he could receive it with his own body.

"“……………………”"

Silence, time flowed slightly.

And, the moment when the big tree fell from the sky between the two people, their figures vanished.

Subsequently, consecutive metallic and crushing sounds were heard. Sparks were scattered about midair and the ground on top of the ring was crushed.

As for speed, Shin was faster. The slashing attack that could be mistaken for a flash of light, he faced towards Girard without any hesitation.

And as for reflexes, Girard was superior as he faced Shin. He didn't specialize in close-range combat just for show. The reaction to the strike, instant judgment, and above all, the attack predictions that came from 500 years long experience. Girard had experienced fighting against numerous people and monsters, and watched Shin fight side by side with him. His intuition showed that he could cope with Shin's attacks, even if Shin had better stats than he had.

He bent his body and dodged the slashing attack from the upper right, approaching while flicking it with his 『Crushing Moon』, and then turned his body back to go under the roundhouse kick from Shin. The wind pressure, from when it missed, created a storm of destruction 10 mels in a straight line. Without minding Shin's attack, Girard jumped up from the ground, after bending down, and drew back his fist.

That fist was then continuously fired out, with the support system magic skill【Enchant • High Blow】 to reinforce it further. It was an additional reinforcement magic, to the fist that could already crush a solid castle wall easily. For a fist that the naked eyes couldn't follow, it was said to be inevitable that the opponent would be definitely crushed.

But Shin, who was a master of swordsmanship, was not so normal that he could not receive it either. The current stats were at the value that Shin was the most experienced with. When he fought against divine beast monsters, when there were confrontations among the Rokuten, and when he defeated Origin too; it was always with these stats.

Therefore, now Shin could completely grasp his own physical abilities. The arms that wielded the katana swung, and the foot that crushed the earth, they moved as Shin imagined them to. Was it because he dueled against this pinnacle opponent, the one known as Girard? His mana manipulation that was imperfect before the duel, it too was sharpened unconsciously. If he strengthened his stats by using the titles, his control might be weakened again. However, when he was in the present state, he was able to use mana naturally, like breathing; Shin was able to grasp it again.

For this reason, he didn't skimp. In contrary to the fist coming toward him, Shin was pouring mana into his beloved katana.

Similarly to Girard’s fist, the blade that now received the support system magic skill 【Enchant • High Edge】 effect was shining, and its edge was sharpened, along with its speed.

The blade raised a buzz sound whenever it cut a fist. Whenever Shin’s blade resisted the fists of Girard, each weapon’s charged mana counterbalanced each other before discharging into the surroundings. Small explosions sounded around the two people as they exchanged blows, and the terrain was transformed.

For a lengthy long rally, remarkably large shocks resounded, then Girard and Shin separated again. Without missing a beat, they began to move. While it was going nowhere, even with the exchange of blows there, the way of fighting changed.

Contrary to before, it had completely changed to a high-speed chase inside the forest, now they dashed without leaving a trail of destruction. Though the figure of the opponent disappeared from sight, the two people wouldn’t make such a blunder as to lose sight at that level.

Let alone the five senses, their intuitions also sharpened. Multiple support system martial arts skills, ranging from【Mind’s Eye】 to 【Insight】 were activated there, and they sensed each other's blood-lust, repeatedly clashing into each other.

The blade that was aimed towards Girard’s blind spot was repelled by his fist, while Shin had to fend off a tempest of fists that came from above with his katana. The attack was coming from all directions, whether from above, front, left, right, rear, and sometimes from the ground when they jumped.

Still, not a single blow was hitting each other's bodies. Since there were stat differences, it was natural for Girard's attacks to not hit.

But even Shin's attacks couldn't graze Girard. A person who knew the ability of these two people would feel a sense of incongruity. No matter how much they kept strengthening, currently there was a wall that couldn't be overturned between Shin and Girard.

"Ah, I can't get through. Is this the limit of the current technique?"

"Did you finish warming up? It's time to show it. I felt something was off only a little while ago."

"Kuku, you found out, huh? I was trying to conceal it."

"Did you think I wasn't gonna find out after we exchanged blows? It would be noticed eventually."

"Don't say that. It's a technique I devised specifically to fight against you. Let me put on some airs a little."

Sparks were scattered with the blade and fist, but the two people were joking around while running in the forest. Shin who was expressing slightly messy words, and Girard who was returning them with a smile.

For both attacks, though they were certainly powerful, it seemed to have turned into a state where friends talked about obtaining a rare item by chance.

They understood each other. There was still much to this fight; they hadn't gotten serious and gone all out yet.

It had been about 10 minutes since the duel had started.

The greatest battle was about to begin.

◆◆◆◆

Whenever Shin and Girard clashed, a portion of the forest vanished as craters and trees were blown away, exposing the devastation. The animals, which had sensed the abnormalities and moved to the edge of the forest, where there was little danger, were perhaps the only things saving grace. The two people were getting absorbed in the fight, but seemed to have considered the area as the damage tended to be concentrated at the center of the forest.

Somehow, that spectacle, which was watched with the 【Far Sight】 skill, was divided into two groups based on their reaction.

"…………"

"It couldn't be…this is when the founder is serious."

"Wow…"

"Ku~"

"Gu-Guru…"

Tiera was speechless at the scene that unfolded before her eyes. Wolfgang, who saw Girard being serious for the first time, growled. Cuore and Yuzuha couldn't cover their excitement. Whereas Kagerou was watching their state.

"It's about time they finished warming up."

"Umu, flashy warm-up as usual."

“Well, expect no less from our king.”

Schnee, Van, and Rajim watched it all with a calm composure, as if saying “You haven’t seen anything yet, there’s still more after this”.

Their reactions were split in two splendidly, into whether or not they had seen that Shin and Girard were not being serious yet.

“Master, they haven’t gotten serious yet, despite all that!?”

“Yes. Shin appears to have hardly used his magic skills at all, and Girard hasn’t shown his new move in that state either.”

“Master is strong like that too, right?”

“Depending on the fight, I still have a hard time against Girard.”

To Schnee who indirectly implied “I am stronger”, Tiera became speechless again. Though Tiera knew that Schnee was strong, after watching the fight between Shin and Girard, she understood how poor her imagination had been. Furthermore, it was said that the two people who were battling now weren’t even completely serious yet. How far away was the existence that spoke to her like it was natural? Tiera finally understood the true meaning.

“Honorable father, this is the fight of a High Human and Girard-sama, right?”

“It seems like there’s still more to it from Schnee-dono’s story. Though I also succeeded in the secret and became strong myself, I can’t help but think I have so much more to learn when I see this.”

“I have had a match with Shin-san before, and I thought he was as much the same as Girard-sama. But it was not so.”

“It’s the person whom founder-sama lowered his head to. We are likely not able to see through that power or something.”

While hearing the explosions echo far away from the hill, the parent and child were having a talk. Meanwhile, their pupils were moving rapidly, as they were going to sear the fight between Shin and Girard into their memory.

“It’s time for him to move.”

“Umu, I guess it will be an exchange of existing skills from now on.”

“That will reach the High Human, huh?”

“Now, it’s up to our king.”

Van and Rajim knew Girard’s trump card. They were not excited nor did they adopt a philosophic view on it; they just calmly watched the progress of the battle.

◆◆◆◆

Chapter 3 Part 3

The intense sounds stopped.

The vibration of the earth and the atmosphere fell silent.

In the forest, in the space that was born from the last clash, the main sources were facing each other.

“Let me declare this. From here, I will become one fang.”

It was time to go all out from here.

Girard announced with the implied meaning, and released all of his power.

There were two changes.

First, the aura that covered Girard’s body slightly shook.

Second, his body trembled a little, and transformed into the appearance of a wolf.

On top of that, there was the beast’s race bonus due to the changed outward.

Though the differences between the outward appearances were small, he was neither discouraged nor unprepared. Had Girard reached that fang? That couldn’t be just a mere transformation appearance.

In contrast to Girard, Shin started to invoke magic skills as well.

“Come then. I will fight with my whole soul.”

Matching that remark, there were 7 attributes of advanced level magic skills developing around Shin.

Starting with a white flame, a water that rotates at a high velocity, then red thunder, to the earth rising from the ground like a snake, if a person who practiced magic in this world saw that, they would faint. As those magics shouldn’t be able to manifest without chanting them one by one.

However, even facing the magic skills that surrounded Shin, Girard’s expression didn’t change a bit. It was natural. If he was shaken at this point, reaching that fang would only be an empty dream.

“————Here I come!”

Just a word. Speaking no more than that, Girard disappeared.

No, it was…

“!!!”

It was high-speed movement without any prior motion. Even for the advanced level chosen ones, the reaction speed was unbelievable.

However, it was not possible to shake off Shin, even with that. Even if Shin was astonished, his perceptual skill continued on grasping Girard’s movement.

Shin unleashed one of his magic skills. A crimson thunder approached Girard————

“It won’t hit!”

Not even a graze on Girard, but the forest was burnt.

“I see!! You have reached this point, huh?!!”

Shin shouted at Girard, who avoided being struck by lightning, while having a smile on his face.

Thunder and light techniques. In magic skills, these two boasted of being the fastest; They were thought to be unavoidable. It was possible only for a small handful of people, who reached an AGI value exceeding 900, with the support skill enabled.

Girard’s AGI value had reached 800. No matter how much he tried to enhance his physical ability, 900 couldn’t be exceeded. However, Girard showed that he could dodge the thunder technique. The action that was impossible in the game, he had shown it to be possible.

“I’ve been waiting, for this time.”

Girard spoke while in a fired-up mood, and closed the distance while feeling the heat on his skin from the lightning before.

He had gone through battlefields, polished his techniques, and searched for the technique that exceeded the limit by himself.

How far had he come? To what extent could he go? Girard himself didn’t know it either.

Still, he knew one thing . He was confident.

“Now, only now————”

Yes, he was sure at this moment.

"My fangs will reach you!!"

He accelerated.

He was faster than when he avoided being struck by lightning.

It passed even the light technique.

Girard was the at the breaking point for a man who was at the summit, as he set foot there.

His whole body screamed with the intention to fight against Shin, as he charged towards the target(Shin) before his eyes.

"Ooooooooooooooooo!!!"

He drew back his fist, while maintaining top speed, with a power that was not even comparable to just several minutes ago. Girard's blow that was approaching had one long straight beam of light behind it, while Shin held his 『True Moon』, prepared to receive the blow.

"You don't think this attack will defeat me, do you?"

Shin told Girard, who then reacted like it was obvious.

"Of course not."

As for Girard too, it was only natural that Shin wasn't surprised.

Girard, who was at the boundary of men, continued stepping onto the road to the summit, and finally he achieved a view of the top. However, Shin was already there. He was not so naive, as to think that this amount of attack would surprise him.

“This is the first time I’ve seen that. How did you do that enhancement?”

“You can ask Schnee. After this battle!!!”

Girard pushed Shin aside together with a roar as he invoked the barehanded system martial arts skill 【Burst Strike】. No matter how different the stats were, mass didn’t change. If it was the current Girard, if he used 【Burst Strike】 which had a powerful knock back effect, it might be able to repel Shin forcibly.

Shin retreated while shaving the ground, and Girard attempted a second assault. There was no chance of winning if the distance increased, and he didn’t have a lot of time either. Therefore, whether or not Girard could finish his attacks in this match? It would depend on that.

The firmly stepped-on ground burst and scattered as Girard’s figure vanished.

“Gaaarr!!”

“Swish!!”

Against the fist that was approaching from his left, Shin put up his blade. The attacks didn’t always come from behind. As Girard couldn’t do such monotonous attacks.

Before the spark went out, Girard’s figure vanished again. He was running around Shin while maintaining maximum speed, and not only from the blind spots, he struck from the front sometimes, too.

Shin was thinking. For Girard’s phenomenal ability to rise, Shin knew Girard’s limit was being exceeded. Furthermore, there was something that he was hiding.

Did he want to use magic, or bring it to close combat? Or maybe do a surprise attack? While observing Girard's movement, Shin considered his next move.

While striking at Shin who didn't move, Girard also thought about how to deal a single blow with all of his might.

In Girard's judgment, Shin, who was using magic skills to move from place to place, was troublesome. Supposedly, if Shin kept freely running around, with that alone, the chances of Girard winning went down to zero.

The skills for Girard, he was not only strengthened by becoming a beast, he was enhanced through the arts, too. And strengthening his body by 3 fold, it was done by consuming his life force. The movements that exceeded Girard's limit, were possible because he staked everything on this fight. Until he could finally fight with Shin head-on.

If he moved poorly and the distance increased, it wouldn't just end with time running out. Nonetheless, he couldn't continue in his present state for a long time. He had to keep up with Shin with all of his efforts. He couldn't behave as he did earlier.

"…Now, I'll go from here!"

With a few words, Shin kicked the ground. A flash, like he was no longer 'going easy on someone' was unleashed at Girard in the form of a thrust.

"Chiii!!"

Girard glanced off the approaching katana with his 『Crushing

Moon』, while at the same time bending his body. Although the place right beside him was blown away, Girard barely succeed in turning that brandish strike to the ground. He landed on his limbs at the same time lifting his upper body, thrusting out his fist high towards the sky.

““Enchantment!!!””

The voices of the two people and the sound of the arms clashing overlapped in succession, and the surrounding trees were blown away from the shock.

With Shin’s activated movement system, martial arts skill 【Flying Shadow】, due to the sudden change of course, together with attacking while pursuing, Girard reacted without even seeing it.

When Shin entered Girard’s range of attack, Girard’s body moved unconsciously. Because he knew the nature of the fight from one another, Girard’s reaction was precise. Shin especially, didn’t know this world’s unique strategy, which Girard had mastered. Therefore, Girard was able to predict the skills that Shin would unleash accurately.

“I guess we don’t have much time. Shall we exchange blows!!”

Shin shouted, with his sword not one step away. He didn’t understand what kind of enhancement Girard used, but he knew this duel, it was not right way. When the duel had become drawn-out, only Shin would have the advantage. Such a thing, was not the fight Girard hoped for.

(Girard, you don’t wish for this kind of fight, do you!!)

With that thought, Shin put his strength into the hand holding his katana.

“Answer me!! Girarrrdd!!”

Girard withdrew back, avoiding the powerful blow, and corrected his posture.

“Kuku, haha, haha, that’s right. Good grief, I got greedy since the enhancement worked smoothly, huh?”

A strained laugh unintentionally leaked out from Girard, answering Shin’s remark. What exactly was he thinking? He reserved his power for the biggest game, Shin, he shouldn’t keep thinking as if he was the same as before. Such thoughts were discarded together while he exhaled.

Does the chance of winning disappear when Shin moves? Does he have the stamina?

Such thoughts were for a person who had the time.

“No, not now. With my remaining strength, my fangs will reach yoouuu!!”

He began to run with those words. As an answer to Shin’s shout, he returned a blow right to the front.

Shin didn’t avoid it. The swung down blade was pushed up, Girard’s shout was answered.

It was a simple blow that had neither had skills nor arts. Thus, there was no need to put much thought as their weapons resounded mutually.

“Hahahahaa”

“Kuahahaha”

It was said that fellow masters didn't need words, they spoke by the exchanging of techniques.

““Hahahahahahahahahaa!!!””

Thus from thereon, the two people stopped talking.

They understood, even if they didn’t speak. They communicated when their weapons crossed.

Only laughter came from their mouths.

“ZeeaaAAA!!”

Shin invoked the katana and water technique combined skill, 【Setsugekka*】, a single blow formed an ice blade, from outside the distance between them. (T/N: Snow, Moon and Flowers)

“GuuraaAAA!!”

Girard’s fist was clad with fire, and broke the icy blade. Furthermore, he thrust out his fist in front before the flames went out.

The range shouldn’t have reached Shin. However, a mass of energy was projected out from his fist, and that fist, made up of flames, rushed towards Shin.

Barehanded flame technique combined skill【Blazing Sky】 and barehanded system martial arts skill 【Far Strike】 were put together for a counterattack.

“This sort of thing, *Burst*!!”

It was several times the normal 【Far Strike】. The bullet of fire with a width of almost 1 mel, Shin cut right in half with his katana. One of the effects bestowed upon 『True Moon』, was the nullification of magic skills that came in contact with the katana blade. Naturally, not all of the magic was erased, pure energy such as martial arts skills couldn't be nullified. Having cut the blow that became the form of a flame technique from Girard just now, it was Shin's height of capability.

Still, being able to cut magic, it became very handy in combat. Though it was a slightly different situation this time, he originally used it to cut barrier skills. With that alone, he could turn the tables.

Yet, it became a trap this time. Simply because Girard knew that Shin was able to cut 【Far Strike】, so he used a skill that let him wear flames.

Under the guise of a huge bullet of fire, Girard unleashed a skill while pursuing, in a situation where Shin would shake off his katana.

It was the barehanded system martial arts skill【Binding Snake】.

To obstruct the movement of the opponent, the energy with the shape of a snake hung around Shin's arms.

"This won't hold me!"

The restraints in front of Shin vanished, but that moment became the chance for winning the fight between the two.

"Shiden——" (T/N: This is also known as Itariden, which was mentioned in the previous part. I have changed it to Shiden.)

That moment when Shin's movement was stopped. Girard dealt a blow with all of his might.

This was the secret that only the person who learned all of the martial arts system skills could unleash.

The pinnacle in martial arts skills.

“——Zekka*!!”(T/N: Superb)

Barehanded system martial arts skill 【Shiden • Zekka】. This skill needed only a moment before it was invoked, its movement was only a pushed out fist, right in front. It had a short reach and an even bigger opening, too.

However, for this reason, its power was top class among the many martial arts skills. If it was in PvP, it was said to be able to overturn the situation with just a single blow.

When the current Girard released it, supposedly, its power should be beyond Shin’s imaginations.

“Ku, GuooooоOO!!!”

In front of the approaching fist, Shin barely slid his 『True Moon』, at the last moment between the attack and his body. But even Shin too, was just barely able to properly parry it, as it was difficult to turn aside. Holding out was not possible, as he was blown away into the forest.

“Aaargh*cough*, as expected, it’s strong.”

Shin was blown away for dozens of mels, while some of the large trees vanished. Though it wasn’t a direct hit, it was clear that damage penetrated into his body. No matter how much of a stat differences remained to some extent, the power of the Shiden class of martial arts skills were in a different league. The forest, except for the place where Shin was, had a folding fan shape scattered for kemels away, testifying to the ferocity of that power.

Shin got up, and returned to Girard's location. Although there was no pause time when using the skill, 【Zekka】 was a skill that had a big backlash. In the game, it became temporarily impossible to move after using it, and unnecessary damage was often received. It was not thought to be able to attack immediately after using such a skill.

Therefore, it was too late to react to an attack while being pursued from the rear.

Girard was soundless, without revealing his presence too, closing in on Shin as he glided on the ground.

He seemed to be able to totally read Shin's thoughts perfectly, and assaulted the moment he had the chance. He suppressed his skill's backlash forcibly, and his pupils were fiery and shined like a beast's in a hunting game

"——!!"

Due to the wind technique skill, the noise of the approaching fist was gone, and the handle of Shin's 『True Moon』 struck up. He judged the blade was good enough, rotated his body with minimal movement, and raising his opposite fist clashed against the armguard on Shin's left arm.

The armguards clashing with each other resounded. It was a blow that could have taken off each others arms, if it was not Shin. The distance between them was only a few dozen cemels. Girard had invaded Shin's domain.

Barehanded system martial arts 【Reverse Wave】———— that skill was the derivation of 【Transparent Wave】 which Shin had used on the golem before. It was not a power that burst from the inside, it was a skill that broke through at a point and exploded on the outside. Though Girard was also slightly damaged from the point-blank range, he didn't worry about such a thing anymore.

But because it was Shin, he wouldn't remain silent when feeling the pressure gathered on his left arm. Shin immediately used 【Steel Repel】, and though the majority of the power from 【Reverse Wave】 was warded off, he couldn't prevent his left arm from being flipped by the shock remaining.

With Shin's damage reduced by his defense, Girard received a portion of the aftermath. As for damage, Girard who had a lot of it shouldn't be able to move right away. Yet, Girard moved. As if there was no damage at all, he invoked the next skill.

Girard forcibly adjust his disordered stance, and what he invoked next was the barehanded system martial arts skill 【Eight Petals Palm】.

As the name might imply, it was an 8-hit combo attack. But the flowing combinations had already all been seen by Shin. Even in this world, there were certain motions to engage a combo attack.

Though Shin didn't know it, it was said that skill was used against the physical body with magic. Each skills' form has their own kind of chants, it could be said that the unleashed blows were invoked by magic. Therefore, it was very difficult to change form in the middle of a fight for a martial arts skill, as its power would drop if interfered with forcibly.

And supposing that rule was not known, if it was a person such as Shin, who was well-informed about the skill and the motion associated with it, it would not be difficult to deal with.

While destroying the posture with a close ranged martial art skills, Shin also dodged the drawn fist, and a kick with minimal movement.

When the last round kick approached from his rear, Shin put his strength into counterattacking it, but once again he was hit by an unexpected attack.

Soon after the kick passed in front of Shin, Girard instantly changed his pivot foot, using the rotation of his body, and aimed for Shin's head. That without a doubt, was the movement of the continuous rotation kick from the barehanded system martial arts skill 【Two Wheels】.

"Guu——!?"

The kick that was approaching his face was stopped by 『True Moon』, Shin raised his eyebrows at the lightness of the power. He didn't know it, but he felt that something was wrong. However, that 'something was wrong' feeling was confirmed before long by Girard's following action. Using Shin's blade that stopped the kick as a foothold, Girard jumped up and invoked a skill while rotating.

He made one rotation above Shin's head, and without breaking his momentum, an axe kick from the barehanded system martial arts skill 【Waterfall】 weaved its way towards Shin on the spot.

The ground caved-in, as Shin, who received that blow, had his feet pushed into the ground. But even with such power, it didn't become the decisive blow.

Shin, whose main job was samurai, was not superior in defense skills like a shield job, and was not equipped with high strength shield either. However, the katana Shin was holding was an 《Ancient》 grade weapon, 『True Moon』. The average shield was no match for its strength. In addition, because its performance as a weapon was top class, it could withstand an attack that was impossible to defend against by ordinary katanas. This was also usually the combat method that was used with a large sword that values strength.

Nonetheless, if Shin was without his prized possession, the 『True Moon』, he probably wouldn't be able to defend against even a single blow of Shiden class attacks from Girard.

"Swish!!"

With his feet buried in the ground, while facing Girard who was in mid-air, Shin counterattacked with nothing but 『True Moon』. Girard, who was a little faster than Shin's katana that was swinging down, took some distance with 【Flying Shadow】.

Shin's thoughts were filled with astonishment. Girard was doing movements that he didn't think of in the game.

Apart from the 【Zekka】's recoil, 【Eight Petals Palm】 to 【Two Wheels】, and 【Waterfall】, Shin thought that such combinations flowing together were admirable even if it was his body caught in the attack.

To work out such a strategy, he had no idea how much training Girard went through. But there was one thing that was clear, giving his complete devotion was Girard's true strength. He was a real warrior, one who might have overtaken High Humans on earth. When he thought about that, Shin, just like Girard, had his chest filled with bitterness.

It was understood. No, he was going to. Still somewhere, he was reminded of the sense of fighting during the game. Although Shin had already experienced PvP in this world, it was not a proper fight. So, he hadn’t experienced something called a real battle.

Thus, he was falling behind.

“…Pathetic. To think that I am the culmination that an opponent is risking their life against, and it ended up like this?”

It not being the final blow, it was all thanks to his stats and his piled up combat experience. But even with that, Girard had also caught up now.

What a predicament, when he said he would accept the challenge. In the way of fighting until now, he might receive a heavy blow sooner or later.

“————No good. This is no good.”

Shin thought. The opponent, whom the first Beast King has pursued, shouldn’t be merely at this level. Even without the unusual titles, everyone must have thought that with an opponent like this, it would be a worthy death.

Is this the limit?

“——No”

Is this how the Master of Girard fights?

“——No”

It should be overwhelming. Being led around shouldn’t be allowed.

He was a High Human. The person who stood on the summit.

“…I’m sorry, Girard. It still wasn’t my everything.”

The way of fighting in the game was over, from here on out, it would be Shin's best.

"Shiden——"

He returned to his senses, and the small skills were meaningless. Similarly with Girard, he would show his feelings with the his highest skill.

With his posture set with him holding the katana above his head. His movements, from up to down, were as if he were about to cut some Chinese bamboo in half.

Just, he only put it all into a single stroke.

"——Amagiri*!!" (T/N: Heaven Slash)

The single blow that designate itself as cutting the heaven, he ran toward Girard in an instant.

"——!!!"

Though Girard understood that he should never lose sight of Shin, still, he couldn't help but stare in wonderment. The blade that was swinging down, it became blurry when Girard looked at it.

His body moved before he could even think of following his instincts and intuition. Girard's abnormal reaction speed was acting in harmony, and reinforced by his body repeatedly.

"Damn it!"

He didn't come through unscathed. Girard's dougi type of armor, though it didn't have any effect in battle, had a part of the shoulder cut open and stained with blood. As it may be called the same Shiden, 【Amagiri】was a more converged power than Girard's 【Zekka】.

Behind Girard, who defended against 【Amagiri】, the earth was cut apart, exposing its cross-section due to the attack.

Nonetheless, for the current amount of damage that had been received, neither Shin nor Girard showed much of a difference.

Still, the presence that Shin gave off, Girard felt it had changed a little. From the blow just now, Shin deciding on something was transmitted.

"...Ku, kukuku, now you're talking! That's what I wanted to see!"

Girard muttered with a smile so ferocious, that even a grown man would run away. Though he was facing death at this moment, he was unbearably happy.

Faster and stronger. Until he could pierce his fangs into that body.

"RoaaaaAAR!!"

The ground was smashed and he ran.

Also with 【Amagiri】, there was big recoil similar with 【Zekka】. Naturally, it produced a big chance too. Girard was aiming for that. If it was the current Girard, he didn't even take two seconds to catch Shin in his attack range.

"UraaaAAA!!"

Shin's roar resounded there.

Girard's fist arrived a little faster, Shin's arm that should be stiff from the recoil, suppressed his mind and jumped up. The blade flashed and sparks were scattered with Girard’s fist. That was a movement that was impossible in the game.

And then the blade flipped. It didn’t mean that he knew how to suppress the recoil. It was by using his stats, that could be said to be forcibly breaking the mechanisms.

However, that was the correct solution. If it was impossible to remove the backlash, then the only thing left, was brute force.

Shin’s invoked movement of the katana technique system martial arts skill 【Swallow Reversal】, added to the blade, which drew an arc. The blade accelerated rapidly in the air once again, as Girard’s body was wounded.

————You have to do it. You have to do this, you know?

————Yes, it was rather late.

Each other’s smiles were deepened. Without saying anything, those words were transmitted through their weapons.

They realized the end was near.

““——!!!””

The smiles were erased, and at the same time they prepared their weapons.

Shin raised his 『True Moon』 over his head, Girard set his fists on his waist. As if they knew what they would unleash next, their preparations were simultaneously ready.

Their eyes met, but silently they bid farewell.

““Shiden——””

This was the end. They understood that mutually.

With the unleashed Shiden. There was no more martial arts to follow this, to decorate the end.

“——Zekka!!”

“——Amagiri!!”

Together with the invoked skills, the figures of two people disappeared. Instantly the distance between them was closed, as well as the impact that shook the space, a violent sound echoed out.

It was the clash of Shidens in close range. With that alone, the ground caved in radially with Shin and Girard in the center. The power of the clash increasing endlessly, the collided energy that was repelled, destroying the surroundings without exception.

Though the power’s repulsion was very powerful, both of them continued to let out Shidens like it was natural. It was an exchange of skills of the Shiden class, which was impossible in the game. Not only the user, but it also put a tremendous burden on each other’s weapons.

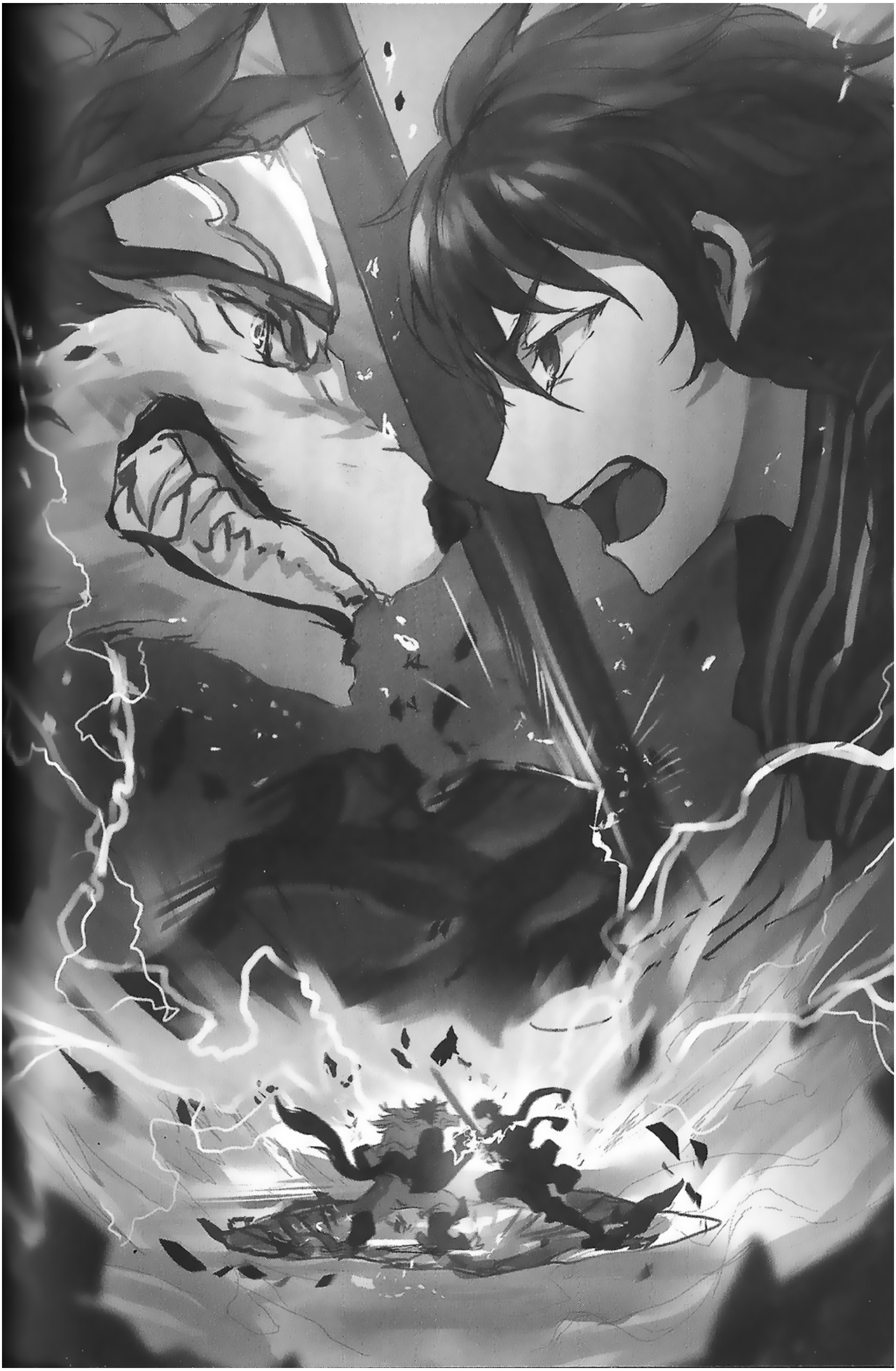
A snapping and cracking sound reverberated. To achieve that, which weapon was it?

No matter how much each of these weapons were bestowed with an invalidity weapon destruction attack effect, what was called durability surely existed. Therefore, it didn’t mean that it would never break, even though they were weapons of 《Ancient》 grade.

Still, even if they heard the screams of each other's weapons, neither of them loosened their power. Because they knew it would become their defeat in that moment, if they relaxed, even if only a little.

““OoooooooooooOOOOOO!!!””

They clashed, separated, and collided again.



Apparently, in this fight similar to a rivalry, Shin gradually began to overwhelm. It was natural, because the ability of the two people was not equal. The weight of the blow after blow, and the burden to the body, the distinct differences became visible.

Therefore, Girard tore off the last charm.

“Shiden!!——”

This was the technique for someone who had already abandoned their life.

Color faded from Girard’s whole body. And, besides the power of his right fist, that was competing against Shin’s 『True Moon』 at close range, power also gathered in his left fist at the same time.

The white light that covered that fist was Girard’s own life force. It was the last splendor of his life, as he was baring his fangs at this moment.

“——Kassenkou*!!” (T/N: Constrict Pierce Armor)

That skill would inflict huge damage to both the armor and shield. A blow, like a flash exploded on Shin’s 『True Moon』.

The sound of something breaking gradually grew bigger.

Girard continued to receive the burden, of the multiple invoked Shidens on himself, yet he still continued to put forth his power.

“Using Shiden simultaneously, huh? That’s cheating.”

Shin cursed while taking the blow from Girard. Still, he didn’t back down. While his Shiden was activated, Shin stacked 【Enchant • High Edge】 on his 『True Moon』.

The power to rampage was arranged beforehand, so they could mutually unleash their best single blow soon. Having realized it was the end, it came down to which one had the first move.

Did they compete for a moment, or only several seconds? Or was it for several minutes?

"""——!!!"""

What reached the limit first was their weapons. The blade of 『True Moon』 broke, and the armor part of 『Crushing Moon』 also broke into pieces.

However, even if the weapons crumbled, it didn't stop the users.

Shin, who was holding the remains of the hilt, took one step toward Girard with both of his hands lowered.

In regards to Girard, with nothing but both fists thrusted out, he single-mindedly charged toward Shin.

Shin too, promptly jumped upward with both hands holding the hilt. However, with both skills, 【Zekka】 and 【Kassenkou】, worn on Girard's fists, and with 『True Moon』 becoming just a handle, without any skills, even Shin couldn't defend against it.

"I got yoouuuuu!!"

The hilt that was used as a shield was repelled by Girard's left fist, as his right fist smashed into Shin's defenseless body.

With a raised roar, his fist ripped through Shin's coat, coming into contact with the solar plexus———— and made a 'Tap' sound, and there, he stopped moving.

"Damnit!!——————Huh?"

I’m done for, was what Shin thought, and he took a step backwards from the unexpected lightness in Girard’s fist. He shouldn’t die an instant death, due to his high stats, but he was prepared for some damage. However, the fist that hit his body had no strength at all.

Shin raised his line of sight towards the thrust out fist, and saw Girard again————He understood.

“…Girard”

“…………”

Girard didn’t respond. Only, he had become rigid in the state where his fist was thrust out.

“Gira——

“Listen, I got…*hack* *cough*…”

Girard interrupted Shin, who tried to call him once more. With blood vomiting at the same time, he fell down to his knees at the spot.

“Hey Girard!”

“…you… Apparently…This is as far as I can go.”

Shin was about to rush over, but Girard stopped it by raising one hand. He knew that recovery and so forth were useless.

“…I received the last blow. As expected from Girard.”

“Kuku, I have lived for 500 years,… not just for show. Surely… these fangs,… have reached you.”

Though his face was pale, Girard was laughing, baring his fangs. It was a ‘proud of myself’ smile, as this body had finally reached his master.

“Urgh…. Now then, my long-held…wish was fulfilled. Shin. Can I request..from you, one last time, a single blow as the reward?”

“…Understood.”

Girard, who had stood up while tottering, spoke of his last wish. After a bit of hesitation, Shin who heard it, accepted it.

From Girard who was barely standing, he took a distance of about 10 mels. And, quietly released his 【Limit】. Simultaneously a torrent of power gushed out. The time when he was exchanging blows with Girard seemed halfhearted, and strange pressure surges were in the surroundings.

“So this is a…”

Receiving the pressure that emitted from Shin, Girard kept standing there. His last wish would depend on Shin’s all out power as the finishing blow.

Power that Girard couldn’t fight against. Thus, to get over the last ordeal, he wanted to witness Shin’s power.

Shin took a stance. The shattered 『True Moon』 was stored into the Item Box, with nothing in his hands. No, to begin with, weapons and so on were unnecessary.

Shin’s stance that he took, was the movement for 【Zekka】. It is quite ironic if that is the case, Girard thought.

“…See you”

“Farewell”

They exchanged a few words, and Shin took a step forward. With that speed, which was godlike. Girard had already lost sight of Shin.

But he knew. Before the blow that was approaching his body, Girard perceived Shin in the world for a moment.

With overwhelming power, and mana gushing out. The speed that would leave everything behind.

That figure, the appearance of the Master whom Girard surely yearned for. The present Shin was more powerful than even the figure that existed in his memory.

He wanted to reach those fangs someday. He, wished to be the best existence. That conflicting wish was now, becoming a shape in front of Girard.

(Indeed, that’s what I expected of my————)

His last thought dissolved, when the roaring sound echoed.

Chapter 4 Part 1

“It seems to have ended.”

It was a little silent, after that remarkably big explosion. The powerful shock wave that crossed the forest and mowed down the trees had stopped.

Not just Schnee, but everyone on top of the hill realized that it was the end of the duel.

““…………””

Wolfgang and Kagerou, who both boasted of high stats too, fell silent. No, they couldn’t say anything. They were cautious while all of their body hair was bristling.

The last blow. They were speechless at that too powerful pressure. Though they knew who fired it, still, the power surge couldn’t be seen in an optimistic view. It made them realize defeat, without even fighting, and they couldn’t help but feel the presence of a conqueror.

It hadn’t been long since they met the person called Shin, but everyone’s breath was taken away as they couldn’t imagine that violent presence had come from the figure of the ordinary Shin.

Therefore. In the midst of that silence, only Schnee remained calm.

“You can’t be befuddled forever, you know.”

““Huh!?””

With that single phrase, everyone quickly came back their senses. It was the moment of their own king's death. This was not the time to be senile.

"Someone is coming here."

"Perhaps, that's…."

Having steeled themselves in the confusing surroundings, Wolfgang and Cuore noticed a person approaching. When did that person get close? There was a figure at the bottom of the hill.

There was only one figure appearing. It walked toward the top of the hill while carrying something on its back. Needless to say, it was Shin and Girard. Shin was shouldering Girard, whose eyes were closed like he was sleeping.

Everyone went down the hill without waiting for Shin to arrive.

"Shin, your clothes…"

"Ah, it's from Girard."

Tiera, who saw the ripped coat, spoke with concern, but understood Shin was not seriously damaged from his gesture, and nodded as she was relieved.

"I will take out the wagon. Please hold onto Girard."

""Affirmative""

While fiddling with the Item Box, Girard's corpse was left to Rajim and Van. After taking out the wagon, Girard was laid behind the carrier, so he wouldn't be shaken.

“Girard-sama…”

Looking at the laid down body, Cuore leaked out a voice with moist eyes. Her shoulders were dropped feebly, the ears that always stretched upwards were now drooping along with her head. Wolfgang didn’t show any of the attitude, but he looked somewhat a little disheartened.

Nothing could be done for the grief to held in, even if it was the person’s own last wish.

“Raise your heads. All of you guys.”

Shin called out to the two people. It was different from before. It was a voice carrying some dignity.

“Shin-dono?”

“He would be ashamed of your sympathy.”

Shin knew what he said was harsh. Gratitude was not expressed. Still, he believed he had to say it himself.

“Princess, Ulu too, don’t be disheartened. Look at the king’s face.”

Van called out, and the two people looked up. Though it was a digression, Ulu seemed to be a nickname for Wolfgang, only spoken by his close friends.

“He has a satisfied look. No one will think he had a regret remaining when they see this.”

Rajim too, called out to cheer up the two people. What Rajim said was right, a faint smile had appeared on Girard’s face. To Van and Rajim, who had shared a long time with him, Girard’s final thoughts were understood, without them even having to wonder.

There was certainly a feeling of sadness. However, the feelings of relief were stronger. They knew Girard had hidden the truth about his life span. Therefore, the joy of him dying without any regrets was bigger.

He would rather die in a satisfying fight than survive shamelessly. Because that was the way of his life, for a man who lived as a warrior.

“That’s right. If I was to weep, I would be laughed at.”

“Ah, you are right.”

From the words of the two people, that were the closest to Girard, Wolfgang and Cuore seemed to have regained themselves. The two people each faced Girard’s death firmly, the resolve to step forward was able to be perceived.

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It didn’t take much time for the wagon to arrive at Girard’s residence in Elden.

The corpse was enshrined by Van and Rajim, and various people in charge of office and executives were gathered under the instructions of Wolfgang. When Girard’s death was announced, there were grieving people, there were people showing an expression of relief, and various other reactions.

There seemed to be people who also guessed at the things that happened in Larua Grand Woods, too. Apparently the sounds of their battle had echoed throughout Falnido. When connecting the dots, together with Girard’s death, questions on who was the person who fought him surfaced.

"The founder's last moments, were very worthy of him."

Wolfgang didn't report Shin's name. However, it was clearly declared that there was no better match for Girard's last fight.

Naturally, there were people who wondered who it was, but the majority of people guessed it was someone similar to a High Human follower. Schnee and Shibaid, both were well known to have interacted with Girard, as for the other members, there wasn't a doubt about their abilities, too.

For the people who still weren't convinced, when they met Girard's corpse and looked at his face, Wolfgang's speech was understood to be truthful. A lot of people from Falnido had the reaction of; this was the spirit of a true warrior.

Anyways, everyone was quickly convinced. Before the day was out, contact was made with each community that lived here in Elden, with the exception of the dog tribe, and they started the preparations for the funeral service in unison.

Girard was unmistakably the founding father, even if he had long since retired. It was a necessity for it to become a national grand funeral. Before the supposing one week, various people gathered in Falnido, reaching the point where the place was like a festival rather than a funeral. Envoys seemed to come from all of the countries with diplomatic relations, except the clan in Falnido.

Because Shin and his group didn't have to prepare for the funeral in particular, they spent every day going back and forth to the library. But they hadn't accomplished much. Still, being able to enter the restricted zone, more useful things were discovered here than from the books in the general area of Bayreuth's library.

Chapter 4 Part 2

And then, it was the tenth day after Girard's death. The funeral of the first Beast King, Girard Estaria, was held in the capital of the dog tribe, Elden, of the Falnido Beast Alliance.

Shin and Schnee participated too. It was told that Schnee came after she had heard the report of Girard's death, and it was accepted without any doubt. Shin and Schnee lined up to see off Girard, equipped with a full body armor for that occasion. Some of the attendees wore the equipment that they had worn when they had shared battlefields with Girard, and Shin, who had put on armor, was mistaken as a veteran hero; he was thought to be a famous soldier. Girard had had a lot of combat experience, so unexpectedly, there were a lot of people who had shared battlefields together, but didn't know each other by sight.

At the funeral, everyone in the upper echelon of the country was present, each tribal head and successor, retired former generals, and so forth; a terrific lineup had been gathered. The representative from the village of elves and pixies was also among them. Wolfgang, who was the king, and Cuore the princess were in the front row. There was a person next to Schnee. It was the representative of the dragon imperial empire, Kilmont, an ally of Falnido, and Shin's support character no. 4, Shibaid Etraku.

He was a High Dragnil with red eyes, and scales like obsidian. As a fellow companion that founded a country, apart from as a person that also served as a fellow vanguard in Shin's party, Shin heard they had formed strong communications. Both the capitals of the two countries should have a considerable distance between them, but somehow, he made it in time. Shin, who saw that figure, felt nostalgic, and thought that as soon as he had calmed down, he would meet him directly.

The funeral advanced solemnly, and finished peacefully without any trouble. Girard’s body seemed to be buried in the earth where the successive kings laid. ‘I am born from the earth, live on the earth, and return to the earth.’ That was the outlook on life and death that most of the beastmen had.

At the end of the ceremony, Wolf Type, Dog Type, and Fox Type, all of the beasts howled together. It was the melody of burial rites, to send off warriors who fought till their last breath.

Girard’s body was buried in the tomb of the kings while being seen off by many people.

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When the funeral was over, Shin returned to the residence. Wolfgang and the executives of the country had a pile of matters to be discussed hereafter, and it seemed that they wouldn’t return home for a while.

“Can I sit next to you?”

Having called out to Shin, who was looking out at the garden, while he was patting Yuzuha above his knee, was Van. The figure of Rajim was seen behind him, too.

“Is the discussion going well?”

“We, the old soldiers, shouldn’t come into play.”

“That’s right, the country’s matters have already been entrusted to others.”

Van sat on the veranda, and spoke those words to Shin who was asking. And Rajim agreed with the words.

The two men were clad in such a calm atmosphere, that Shin had the feeling that they would disappear at any moment.

“What will you two do from now on?”

“Go on a journey.”

“Journey?”

“Yes, because our companion is waiting, too.”

“…I see. Go join your friend.”

Their companion is waiting, too. From the words which Van said and the atmosphere around him, Shin felt something special. He knew the destination of the two people.

“…Hey, according to you two, what kind of guy did you see Girard as?”

After a few minutes of silence, such words came out from Shin’s mouth.

“He was a great person.”

“He was a warrior rivaled by nobody.”

As Van and Rajim were feeling nostalgic, they closed their eyes and spoke.

He stood before everyone else, a leader who showed the way. A great person, who possessed overwhelming fighting power.

“He was a solitary man.”

“He was someone who got lonely easily.”

A hero without equal. A lonely king.

Because of his combat power, it was often said that it couldn’t be helped that he fought alone on the battlefield. If neither Schnee nor Shibaid was there, the two people said he would really keep standing alone on the battlefield. And yet, he seemed to impulsively pick quarrels with his friends.

“He was a person who thought of his friends.”

“He was a person who could do nothing but fight.”

For this reason, people gathered in Girard’s surroundings. For the sake of his friends he picked up a weapon, and rushed on to defeat monsters, he gathered up the tribes during the confusion of the crustal movement. He was just like a hero from the fairy tales.

Just, unlike a lot of heroic tales, he had no enthusiasm to be king. Girard’s job was focused purely on combat. Other than that, it was not important.

Though people requested it from Girard, he himself knew that he didn’t have the ability to rule. If anything, he was fit as a general. Thanks to that, he needed people to support him. Van and Rajim were first on the list, and he was said to have a hard time. Nevertheless, though he never tried to stop them from leaving, he felt mutual trust within those surroundings.

While having fighting power that could be called abnormal, it wasn’t the contributing factor on why he was alone. As the gap between battlefield and daily life was tremendous, the two people spoke in unison at the end.

"I see, thank you for telling me."

The appearance of a Girard, whom Shin didn't know, was there.

"Shin-dono, I want to express my gratitude once again."

"What's that, suddenly."

Van straightened his posture and bowed to Shin. When he moved his line of sight, Rajim too, was bowing in the same way.

"Hey now, both of you."

"For granting the king's wish. Our feelings of gratitude will never end."

"Come on now, just quit it. It happened by chance, really."

Yes, it really was a coincidence for him to return, and etiquette was not necessary, Shin thought. Moreover, if Shin didn't return, Girard might still be alive.

"We don't think of those kinds of things at all."

Rajim spoke his words while raising his head, to Shin who did think about these kinds of things.

"A life that does not end, it's painful for us beasts, who are not of the long-life kind."

Rajim said. The average lifespan of a beast didn't vary much compared to humans. It was about 120 years at most, even if one had a long life. Sure, there would be people who would live for several hundreds of years, that were born in this age, but judging from the whole, it was only a small handful. In comparison with the elves and pixies, who seem to live for an eternity, it could be said that life was too short.

However, that was fine. Elves are elves, pixies are pixies, and beasts have the beast's way of life. It was very cruel, that he alone deviated from that road.

Except for himself, the other people that were born, died. People who lived in the same time as him, left him. Certainly, Girard's soul was gradually being eaten away by time.

"We are people who live for just a short time. Living a long life is like an endless prison. Thus, to Shin-dono, who released the king from there, it's natural for us to express our gratitude. Even if it was by chance that you returned here, you did not leave without doing anything."

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Van and Rajim left, and a veil of darkness descended in the area. Because he conveyed that he would have dinner by himself, no one came to call on Shin.

While the moonlight shone, Shin was still on the veranda. Yuzuha had curled its tail and was sleeping.

"...Welcome home."

Shin called out to Schnee as he perceived her approaching. Though Shin returned to the residence soon after he had witnessed the burial, Schnee, who was in a special position, was unable to return immediately.

After the fight, outwardly, Shin appeared to have no change until now. However, looking at it from Schnee's viewpoint, that state of no changes was unnatural. For this reason, she wanted to be at his side if possible, but Schnee had to attend a meeting.

The general greeting was finished, and when she returned to the residence and felt the presence of Shin, she discovered that he was looking at the night sky from the veranda. But the face that she saw from the side seemed to melt inside the moonlight and disappear; he looked empty.

Schnee approached quietly and embraced Shin. Because he was sitting, Shin's face was held against Schnee's breasts, but his expression didn't have any big changes.

"…Schnee?"

Shin called Schnee's name in wonder. But that voice somehow lacked feeling, too.

"The current Shin seemed to have disappeared somewhere."

Oddly enough, it was the same feeling that Shin felt from Van and Rajim. In order to erase the anxiety welling up inside his mind, Schnee put power into her arms to hold Shin.

"Whatever it is. Please say it to me."

She didn't know what she was able to do. But to make him even just a little energetic, Schnee spoke the words.

Before long, an answer came back.

"Just a little while ago, Van and Rajim came."

Saying few words, Shin conveyed the things he talked about with those two. With Schnee embracing Shin closely, she listened to his voice.

“Van and Rajim said they understand it.”

“Yes.”

“They also said they understand Girard’s own wish.”

“Yes.”

“Even me, I understood it as the opponent.”

“Yes.”

While speaking, Schnee noticed Shin’s voice was trembling a little.

After coming to this world, the time Shin spent with Girard was awfully short. However, they discussed each other’s intentions through weapons, to fill the time they had been apart. It was neither NPC, and not data either; it was the real Girard. The length of time spent and so on, was unrelated to the two people.

Therefore, in a sense, this was the proper reaction.

Even if the person himself wished it. Even if the surrounding people consented. But still.

“My friend died…it’s hard….”

It was painful. Because Shin understood it at the end.

“…Please cry. You have fulfilled your obligation. It’s okay to grieve.”

While hugging Shin, Schnee also noticed that her view was blurry.

She must be sad, and it must be difficult. To Schnee, Girard was an important companion.

Beneath the moonlight, without sobbing, and without crying voices.

Only the tears didn’t stop.

The two shadows that drew close to each other under the moonlight, slowly separated.

The person who got over his sadness, in his eyes a fire with a strong light was lit .

The moon sunk over the horizon, and the sun made its appearance.

The spectacle that filled the world with light, Shin directly watched it.

Chapter 4 Part 3(Side Story)

One day, while waiting for the duel with Girard, set to be held 3 days later.

“Falnido is more lively than a country of humans, huh?”

“If I were to say it in a few words, it’s because the customs and cultures are quite different from tribe to tribe.”

Shin, who said so, spoke without any particular reason, but was dutifully answered by Cuore.

Four days had already passed since Shin came to Girard’s place in Elden.

It’s not good to stay in the library all the time, said Schnee and Tiera; which was the reason they were sightseeing in the town. Cuore who heard them, immediately announced she would become his guide, which is how they reached their current state.

Only Cuore walked next to Shin, except for Yuzuha who was sleeping on top of Shin’s head. Tiera was doing a completely different action of siding herself alongside Schnee.

Tiera, who was taken away by Schnee, had a gloomy face, or it was probably just his imagination. Shin deceived himself, she’ll feel better when she comes back.

“Though I only took you to the recommended places until now, is there anywhere Shin-dono would like to go?”

The capital of Falnido was decided on as the city where the king resides. Therefore, the current capital was here at Elden. He had heard the explanation from Schnee, but naturally it was not on a scale that could be called a village. It would be difficult to finish going around it in one day.

“Places I want to go, huh?”

Since Cuore already guided him to some extent, it didn’t occur to him right away.

“So?”

While thinking about where he wanted to go, what entered Shin’s line of sight was the signboard of a certain shop. Shin who saw it, for some reason, picked Yuzuha up from on top of his head and brought it before his face.

“Kuu?”

Yuzuha, who was suddenly being held, barked like it wanted to say: “What is it?”

“That reminds me, I have a feeling that Yuzuha’s fur is going from a bad situation to a worse one.”

One of Rokuten’s members, Cashmere, had taught him a lot of things about taking care of monsters. Was this because hugging a monster that had a good coat fur let one thoroughly enjoy its fluffiness? The present Shin understood the disorder of its fur to some degree. Of course, there was no such skill in the game. But when he stared at it closely, he was certain that the coat hair was deteriorating after all.

“For the moment, may I stop at that shop?”

“That one? Ah, I see. I understand.”

Cuore, who saw the shop, somewhat knew what Shin thought, and agreed immediately.

When they passed through the door and entered, a Dog-type woman came over.

“Welcome. What are you looking for today?”

After the woman shifted her attention from Cuore, who was standing next to Shin and Yuzuha, whom he carried, she shifted her pleasant eyes toward Shin.

Shin felt like he was being somewhat misunderstood.

“I need a brush for brushing, but I also want you to show me some combs….”

“Certainly. Here please.”

In the place which that woman guided them, there were big and small brushes displayed. Ignoring the employee who was speaking slowly, Shin looked at the brushes.

Apparently, there were materials that were prefered by different races, although they looked the same, they varied from materials to prices.

Dog, Wolf, Fox, and so on seemed to have similar preferences, as they were sold together.

“Amazing. Do you have something like personalized brushes here?”

“For a particular person, they can get the material by themselves.”

It was not rare, as Cuore had one, too. As Shin felt admiration for the beasts' obsession to brush, suddenly he remembered these kinds of things. It was by the greatest tamer; the article that had been carefully made by Cashmere. It was something that seemed comfortable when Girard was brushed in the game era.

"I don't have much time to explore, so I should care for Yuzuha every once in a while."

"Kuu!"

He purchased some items to improve the coat of hair, and they exited the shop.

When they returned to the residence, Shin sat on the veranda outside of the room, and took out the brush, 'Gloomy Star', from his Item Box. It had a dark appearance, like a common brush. But the handle was made from the World Tree's trunk, and the bristles of the brush were made from the materials removed from a level 800 gigantic monster with a large mass of hair, called Tyrant Bristle.

By the way, here is the description: <From here on, you are the Brushing Master, may the best coat be with you>, was one sentence that appeared. With brushing alone, cat, dog, horse and so forth, the favorability of the monster for each model increased. It was certainly a super brush.

Originally, there were various kinds of brushes; this brush was for hair loss, the furballs were collected and broken down by the magic item; it was also a magic tool.

"Keep still."

Shin said, and he put the brush on Yuzuha's back. First, it was gentle, as the brush loosened up the hairs.

"Kuu~…"

While being careful not to put in too much power, the entwined hair was unraveled. Did this gentle repeated brushing feel good? Yuzuha let out a bark, like it was losing strength.

"………"

Cuore was staring enviously at Yuzuha. Though she should be free, since the town tour was finished, when she heard that Shin was going to brush Yuzuha, she asked him to show her by all means. Shin too had no reason to decline, though it might be boring, so her being there was approved.

With her admiration for Shin continuing to accumulate from Girard's stories, his courteousness and skillful brushing of Yuzuha was seen, so Cuore unconsciously thought about these kinds of things.

——Is it no good if I request it of him?

——No, it's rude to him…he's a High Human, yeah.

——But, still…

For a beast, having the opposite sex do the brushing and grooming had a special meaning.

It was an expression of one's intention towards their lover, or someone close like a family member. A woman requesting it from a man, although it wasn't necessarily a confession, the fact of it being special didn't change.

While her tail and ears were twitching, Cuore was inwardly troubled about what to do, and the figure of someone she knew approached from the other side of the veranda.

“Hmm? Shin? Didn’t you go sightseeing in the town?”

“I have to take care of my partner occasionally, hence the brushing.”

“I see. Fumu…It’s been a long time. Can I request it too?”

“Sure, it’s almost over, so please wait a little. Come to think of it, this brush was made by Cashmere for Girard’s sake.”

They exchanged such a conversation, as Girard sat next to Shin. Yuzuha’s brushing ended after a few minutes, and the brushing of Girard, who transformed into a beast, began this time.

“………”

Cuore was speechless at seeing such a scene. The current Girard who hadn’t let anyone, except his deceased wife, brush him was well known to Cuore.

However now, Girard was lying down and had his eyes closed before her; while Shin carefully moved the brush using one hand. That appearance, which looked like a large dog that entrusted its body on the knee of its master, was captured by Cuore’s eyes.

Though Wolf Types hate to be treated like a dog, it couldn’t be helped but to think so. Cuore felt the reliable bond between the two people.

(For Girard-sama to make such a face, I’m seeing it for the first time.)

The expression was hard to understand when Girard was in beast form, but Cuore, who was a similar Wolf Type, understood well that Girard was relaxing and loosening his whole body.

Unlike Yuzuha, Girard had a large physique, but eventually it ended in less than 30 minutes.

“I feel refreshed after such a long time.”

“I’m glad you feel that way!”

“Now then, on this occasion, how about you do it to Cuore as well?”

“Eh!?”

It was a dream come true for Cuore, but at the unexpected development, she shouted out unintentionally.

“I’m fine with it, but is it okay to do it? Apart from the monster Yuzuha, and the man, Girard, Cuore is a woman. To do that to the opposite sex, there tends to be a lot of strange meanings that could arise though.”

Shin turned toward Girard with a suspicious face. Even without the knowledge, he thought there was some meaning to the act.

“That will not be a problem. To let my master take care of my descendant, there’s no motive. Cuore also seems to anticipate it.”

“Wha!? G-Girard-sama!?”

Cuore’s face reddened from Girard’s remark. But no words of denial came out from her mouth.

While she tried to say something in a hurry, eventually she finally looked downward embarrassed, answering “Yes” in a faintly audible voice.

“Well then, I’ll do it as carefully as possible, it’s my first time brushing a woman. If the power is too much for you, I want you to say so without any reservations.”

“Understood. Please treat me favourably.”

Cuore transformed into a beast, and put her body weight on Shin the same way as Girard did. Immediately she felt the brush touch the back of her head. Slowly and carefully, the entwined hairs were pulled apart without causing any pain; it was a skilled hand movement.

“…!! …Umn…nn”

Was it because of the superior tool, or because of Shin’s technique? Choppy voices leaked out from Cuore’s mouth, as she felt the comfort that she didn’t experience in everyday brushing. With each stroke of the brush, she felt calmness. Before several minutes had passed, Cuore was in a dreamy state of dreaminess.

“Kukuu, she somehow looks pleased.”

“Kuu. Shin is skilled.”

Girard and Yuzuha understood. Understood in that territory, but Cuore didn’t notice. Within that comfort, just like receiving a first rate massage, her cheeks loosened.

“Alright, it’s done.”

“*Woof*…Thank you very m…What did I just say!?”

Girard laughed.

“In the presence of others, make sure to not let your mind wander.”

“Ugh…I think I let my guard down a little, anyway it’s different!”

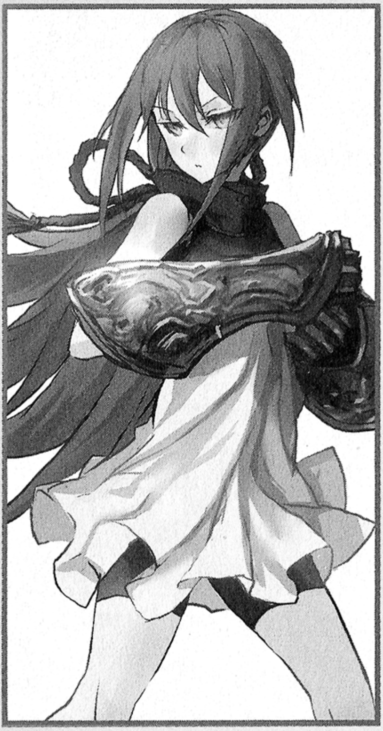
The feeling of being embarrassed rose, when she said things that she only spoke about in her own room. However, when her head and neck were being gently stroked by Shin, she was able to regain her composure a little. If she looked at the front, Girard being patted the same way was relaxing. Before anyone noticed, Yuzuha was already sleeping on top of Girard. At that appearance, Cuore had a soft smile.

Tiera and Schnee came back after a while, Shin at that time, was like a master that was surrounded by his pet dogs; wry smiles on their faces.

That was just a few days before Girard died.

It was like the good old days they spent before, a peaceful time.

Illustrations



Name: Tsubaki Ignite

Gender: Female

Race: Lord

Main Job: Fist Fighter

Sub Job: None

Adventurers' Rank: E

Affiliated Guild: None

● Stats

LV: 133
HP: 3179
MP: 1532
STR: 310
VIT: 225
DEX: 373
AGI: 297
INT: 121
LUC: 54

● Battle Equipment

Head: Red Silk Ribbon
Torso: Pelt Chest Protector(VIT Bonus[Small])
Arm: None
Leg: Wind Rumble Skirt(AGI Bonus[Weak])
Accessories: White Crystal Necklace(Abnormal status resistance[Small])
Weapon: Steel Arm Guard

● Title(s)

- Taijutsu Novice

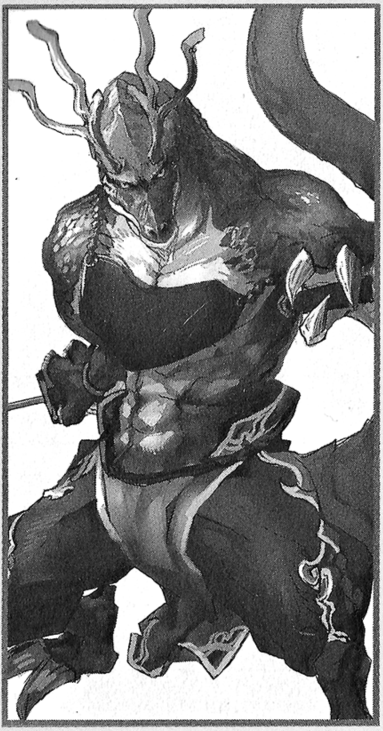
● Skill(s)

- Spirit Manipulation (Combined with Arts version)
- Shadow Strike
- Steel Repel

etc

Other

- None



Name: Gaien Greig

Gender: Male

Race: Dragnil

Main Job: Samurai

Sub Job: Knight

Adventurers' Rank: A

Affiliated Guild: None

● Stats

LV: 187

HP: 4490

MP: 1881

STR: 439

VIT: 524

DEX: 310

AGI: 233

INT: 176

LUC: 70

● Battle Equipment

Head: None

Torso: Magic Ox Chest Protector(VIT Bonus[Weak])

Arm: None

Leg: Magic Silk Trouser(AGI Bonus[Weak])

Accessories: None

Weapon: Yukishigure(40% additional damage against monsters with certain abilities, Katana and water technique combined skill【Setsugekka】)

● Title(s)

- The Wielder of Magic Katana
- Katana Technique Master

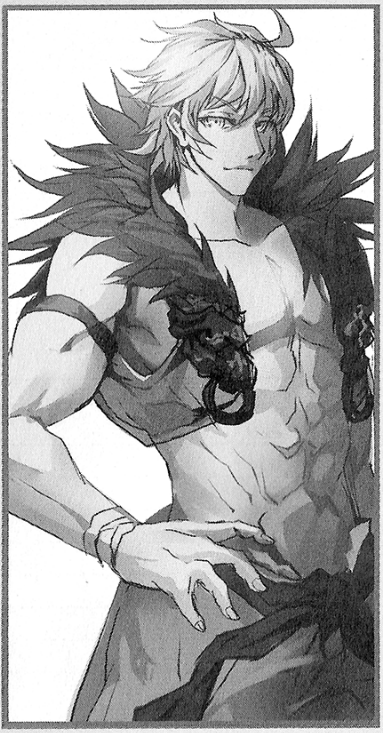
● Skill(s)

- Blade Breaker
- Spirit Manipulation
- Setsugekka

etc

Other

- None



Name: Wolfgang Estaria

Gender: Male

Race: High Beast

Main Job: Magic Fist Warrior

Sub Job: Beast Warrior

Adventurers' Rank: None

Affiliated Guild: None

●Stats

LV: 210

HP: 7772

MP: 4980

STR: 702

VIT: 578

DEX: 611

AGI: 678

INT: 338

LUC: 58

●Battle Equipment

Head: None

Torso: Black Lion's Dougi(VIT Bonus[Strong])

Arm: None

Leg: Dragon's Whiskers Trousers(AGI Bonus[Strong])

Accessories: Orichalcum Ring(INT Bonus [Medium], Abnormal status resistance[Medium])

Weapon: Swift Fang(Weapons Destruction Resistant[Medium], Additional damage to equipment[Medium])

●Title(s)

- Barehanded Technique Master
- Taijutsu Master
- Commander
- Magician's Natural Enemy
- Beast Element Holder

etc

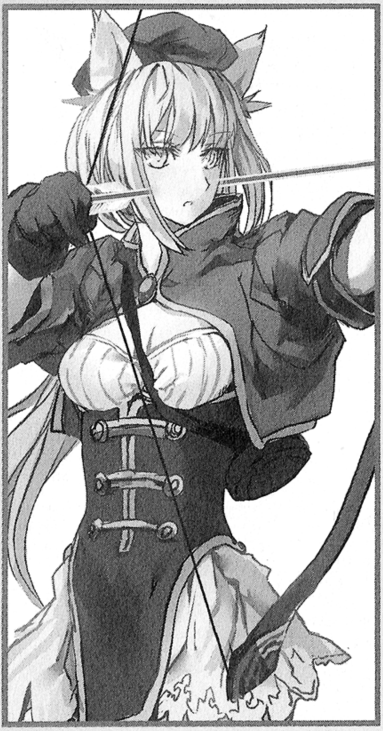
●Skill(s)

- Mind's Eyes
- Blazing Sky
- Binding Snake
- Spirit Manipulation
- Two Wheels

etc

Other

- Current Beast King



Name: Cuore Estaria

Gender: Female

Race: High Beast

Main Job: Beast Warrior

Sub Job: Hunter

Adventurers' Rank: None

● Stats

LV: 179

HP: 6334

MP: 3709

STR: 644

VIT: 532

DEX: 601

AGI: 660

INT: 429

LUC: 77

● Battle Equipment

Head:	Ranger Cap(VIT Bonus[Small])
Torso:	Green Jade Jacket for Beasts(VIT Bonus[Medium], DEX Bonus[Weak])
Arm:	Green Jade Guard for Beasts(STR Bonus[Medium], DEX Bonus[Weak])
Leg:	Magic Silk Skirt(AGI Bonus [Medium])
Accessories:	Green Jade Earrings(Abnormal status resistance[Medium])
Weapon 1:	Orichalcum Dagger(Weapons Destruction Resistant[Medium], 60% additional damage against monsters with certain abilities)
Weapon 2:	Short Bow of the Holy Tree(Charge Shot, Mana Auto Restore)

● Title(s)

- Barehanded Technique Instructor
- Taijutsu Instructor
- Archery Assistant Instructor
- Fencing Novice
- Beast Element Holder

etc

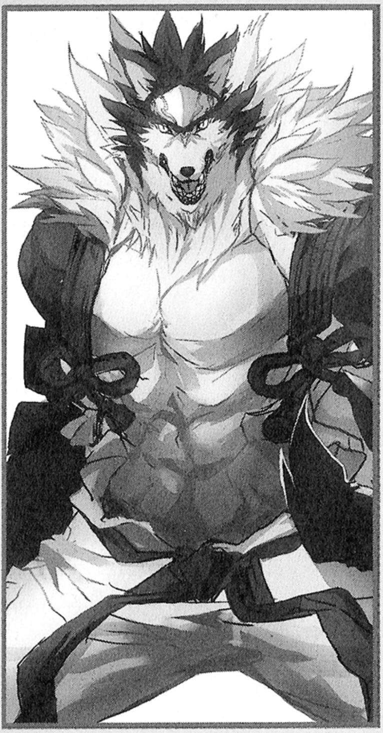
● Skill(s)

- Mind's Eyes
- Spirit Manipulation
- Gale Shot
- Whirlwind Slash

etc

Other

- Beloved daughter of the Beast King



Name: Girard Estaria

Gender: Male

Race: High Beast

Main Job: Magic Fist Warrior

Sub Job: Beast Warrior

Adventurers' Rank: None

Affiliated Guild: Rokuten

●Stats

LV: 255

HP: 9167

MP: 5223

STR: 881

VIT: 672

DEX: 739

AGI: 787

INT: 536

LUC: 67

●Battle Equipment

Head: Earth Fissure Forehead Protector (STR Bonus[Special], Sensory disturbance ineffective)

Torso: Earth Fissure Dougi(VIT Bonus [Special], DEX Bonus[Special])

Arm: None

Leg: Earth Fissure of Leg Guard(AGI Bonus[Special], Restraint and Debuff invalidity)

Accessories: Age of Gods Earring

Weapon: Crushing Moon

●Title(s)

- Barehanded Acme
- Wielder of Magic Arm Guard
- Taijutsu Acme
- Commander
- Beast Element Holder

etc

●Skill(s)

- Zekka
- Mind's Eyes
- Blazing Sky
- Binding Snake
- Cannon Wave

etc

Other

- The first Beast King
- Shin's support character no. 3